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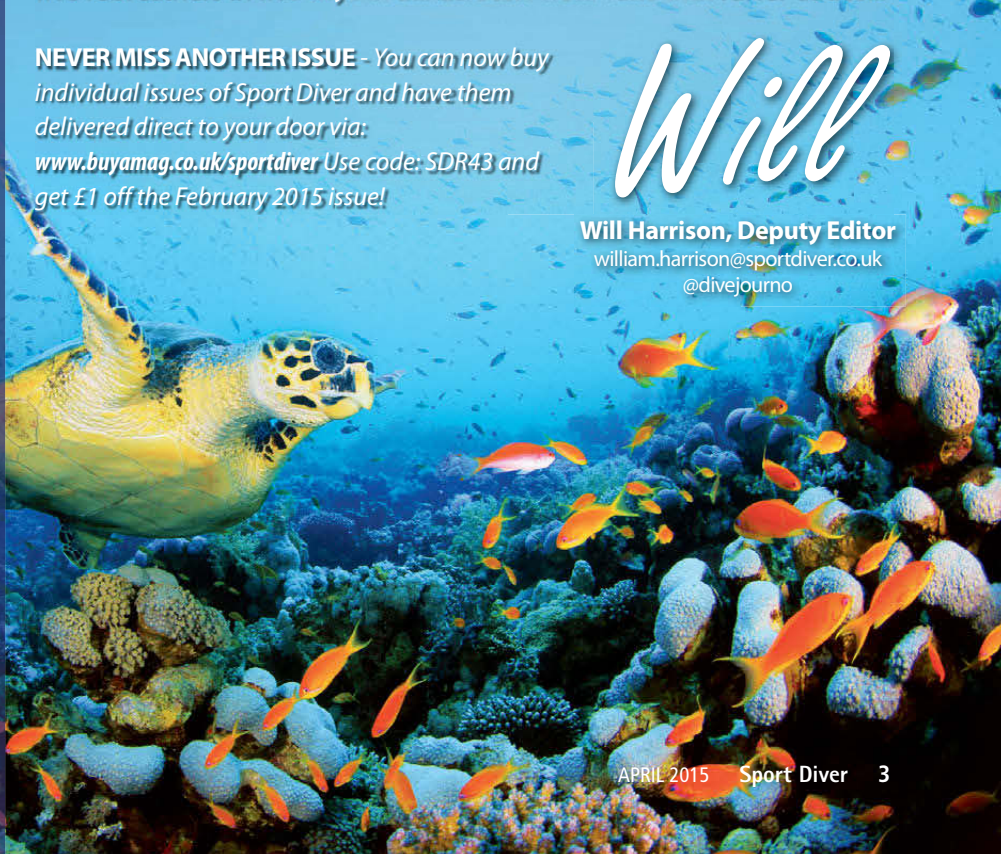
It dawned on me while walking around this year's London International Dive Show just how fortunate we are as divers. There aren't many hobbies that are as varied and inspiring as ours. Sure, there are a great number of thrilling pastimes out there - surfing, kite-surfing, skateboarding, snowboarding, yada yada... but a skate park in London probably isn't all that dissimilar to one in Sydney, say. And a piste in the Alps isn't radically different from those in the Rockies. Diving, on the other hand, can offer an entirely different experience in one part of the world compared to another - even, in fact, from one end of a country to another. Warm and cold water; murky and clear water; kelp and

coral; flat reefs and deep walls; nudibranchs and sharks; mantis shrimp and whales. Diving off the coast of the UK is different to that of Iceland or South Africa or Indonesia. While surfers chase particular breaks on account of the thickness or angle of a wave, we chase totally unique experiences. This variance in experience is represented quite perfectly in this issue. While Gavin Anderson has reported on the beauty of Ibiza's caves, Al Hornsby has spoken of the vividness of the deep south of the Maldives. While editor Mark Evans was enthralled by a shallow wreck in Egypt, David Jones discovered the charms of St Eustatius. But the real showcase for variety this month is Stuart Philpott, a one-man-band for dive diversity. He has spent time on a fascinating WWI wreck here in the UK, dodged pigs and burst eardrums in Papua New Guinea and trydived five rebreathers in five days in Lanzarote. Phew! Take that surfer dudes...

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Will

Will Harrison, Deputy Editor
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PHOTOGRAPHER CARLOS VILLOCH

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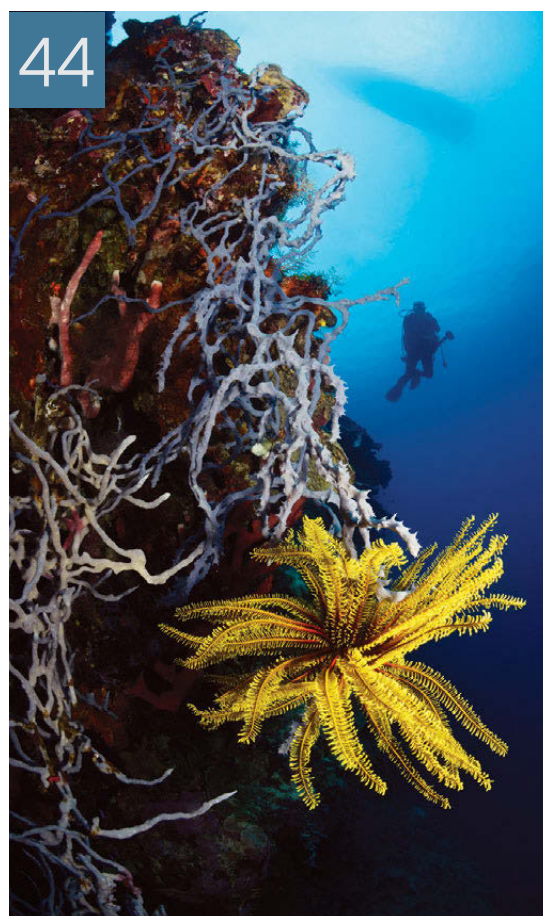
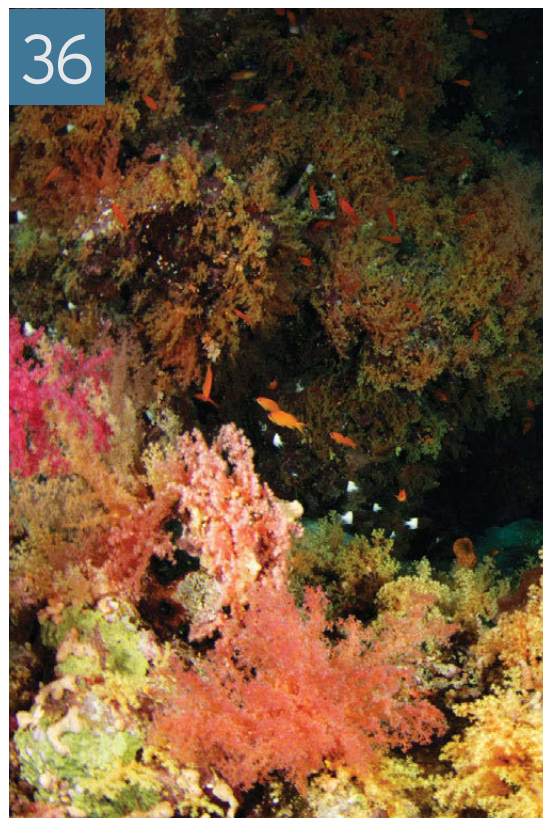
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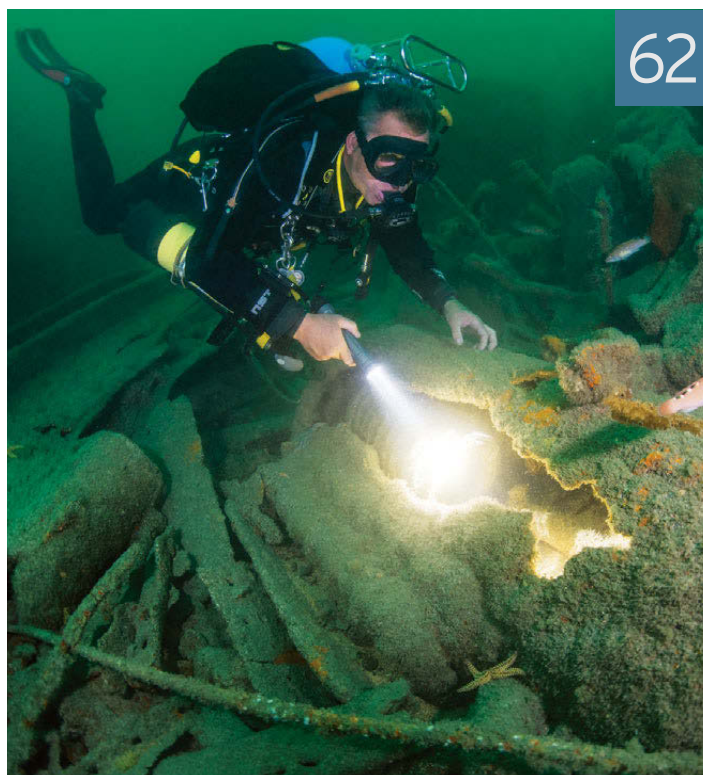
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TURN TO PAGE 34

The sinking of the ferry ÆRØSUND

Sunday 5 October was quite an unusual day for Danish divers... unusual for all Danes, in fact. It was the day the old postal ferry ÆRØSUND was sunk – and not by accident, but deliberately.

Text by LARS STENHOLT KIRKEGAARD, photographs by LARS STENHOLT KIRKEGAARD, THOMAS FECHTENBURG, MIKKEL NOE-NYGAARD RASMUSSEN, RENÉ BRUNO NIELSEN AND PETER DIINHOFF HENNINGSEN (C) FOTOGRAFIT.EU

The sinking of old ferries, or old ships in general, is not common at all anywhere in Northern Europe. For people that have never heard about such things, it is often seen as pollution and a hazard to the water traffic, but in some countries around the world, the sinking of an old ship that has been cleaned and where all hazards have been removed is a regular occurrence. Malta has sunk a lot, and in Portugal a large park has been created, but this was virtually unheard of in Denmark.

The plan for sinking the ferry started back in 2012. The 54-metre ÆRØSUND had been sailing for 39 years in the Archipelago of the Southern Fynen area of Denmark. It is an area with lots of small islands, and a treasured area for sailing enthusiasts. For hundreds of years the way to get around between the islands was by boat, and where you have a lot of boat traffic, you also have lots of wrecks. And therefore the diving community in the area is very well developed.

ÆRØSUND was the last privately owned railway ferry in Denmark and it had a historic value, so was not to be chopped into small bits and sold as scrap metal. So no one really knew what to do with it, or had the money to build it into something useful. A floating restaurant or a museum had been thought about, but it all came down to the cost of both rebuilding it, and maintaining it in the future, so for many years, the old ferry stayed in the harbour of Svendborg.

One day, the people from Naturturisme came up with the idea to sink it, for the benefit of the environment, the nautical scientists, and not least, for divers. Naturturisme is a state-owned company, with the purpose of developing tourism attractions in the area,



The ferry being prepared for its final voyage

and they saw this as a great way to attract divers to an area that was already known abroad by tourists, but not well known for its diving.

It took more than two years to get all the necessary permissions in place, and then it was a case of getting on with the clean-up, stripping out all the cables, engine and oil, and preparing the wreck for divers. This was a large job, which was partly carried out by professionals, a team of young people from the town and the local dive clubs.

The next problem was finding a site. Denmark is the gateway to the Baltic Sea, but in most places close to shore you'll only find a sandy bottom and not much depth. So even though people would have liked a position available from the beach, very central to Svendborg, finding room for a large ship like this was not easy. But a location was found

next to Svendborg, at a place called Ballen, 500 metres off the coast in 19-20m and easily accessible by boat.

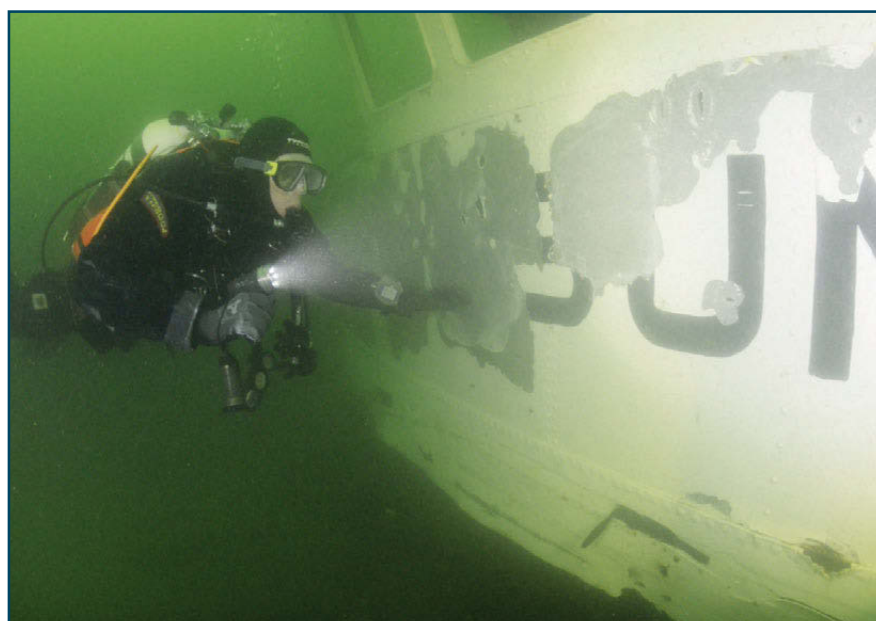
One of Europe's largest commercial diving companies, J.D. Contractor, agreed to carry out the actual sinking. The ferry was filled with sand to make it so heavy that filling it with water from large pumps would make it sink. Four anchors were placed in each corner to keep it in place during the sinking.

Hundreds of ships turned up on the day of the sinking, which made it possible for thousands of people to be present. Many of the spectators were locals or former locals that had themselves sailed on the ferry at some point during its almost 40 years on active duty. All through the day, TV stations aired many hours of live broadcast with interviews of people for whom the ferry had meant something in their childhood, or when

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Action cameras captured the waters flooding into the sinking ship



A diver explores the newly sunken vessel, which is sure to become a popular dive site

it had brought them home for Christmas, and similar stories. It was touching to see how many people were emotionally moved by the whole thing.

The pumps started... and then it took a little more than an hour to fill the hull. All over the ship, action cameras had been placed to document the water coming in, and the sinking, and once they had been turned on it was

just a matter of waiting. First the ferry started to move heavily to the left, then it pulled up, and once the hull was full, the water poured directly into the car deck and from there it went very, very fast. Air was rocketed out through the holes as the heavy ship sank down through the green water, leaving the surface quiet and calm, with just a few roses on the water as a memory of what once was. ■

DIVING
WITH FRIENDS



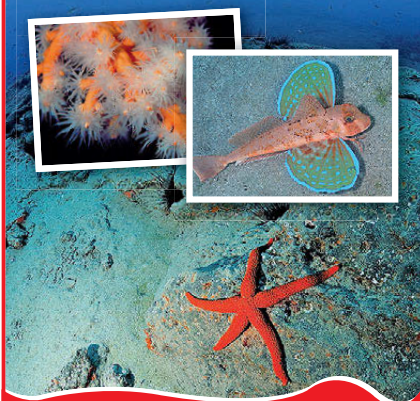
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New dive boat takes to the water



The Huskyan is an impressive vessel purpose-built for divers



Aerial shot from the top of the crane



The Huskyan bow

Scapa Flow's latest dive boat, Huskyan, was officially launched off the South Coast on Thursday 22 January.

The vessel was built by Brian Newbury of Newbury Engineering in Newhaven and she is notable for several things - she is his 55th boat, the first he has ever built for a woman, and also his last boat, as he is retiring.

She is a purpose-built steel and aluminium dive boat. She has a square stern to maximise space for the dive deck, twin engines for super manoeuvrability and redundancy, large diver lift, as well as two metres plus of headroom throughout and what can only be described as a luxury interior.

Skipper Emily Turton said: "Huskyan's clever design means that we will double the space of the Radiant Queen without needing to be double the length! She has been specifically designed by our naval architect to be a comfortable and stable diving platform. The

benefits of a new build mean that Huskyan is tailor made to suit the needs of the diver with no need to compromise because of existing layouts of second hand vessels.

"We will be sad to see the Radiant Queen go, but we feel that we have now outgrown her and it goes against our nature not to want to keep improving things! It is time to introduce a modern dive boat to Scapa. Huskyan will offer five-star facilities for the 21st Century diver."

To see more of the build, get on Facebook and look up: MV Huskyan and Divers Lodge.

Emily added: "The build started in April 2014, but Ben and I started the project to design and build our own dive boat back in August 2013.

We are now busy finishing the inside and will be sailing up the east coast back to Orkney very soon.

"Exciting times are ahead and we are really looking forward to the 2015 season."

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Ice Mile completed for Sea-Changers



Photo credit: Terry Scott

Kate on her 'Ice Mile' challenge swim

On Saturday 31 January, Kate Steels-Fryatt, 45, from Bishops Waltham, became only the 110th person to swim an Ice Mile, ratified under the International Ice Swimming Association (IISA) Rules.

An 'Ice Mile' is a swim of at least 1609.3 metres in water of less than 5 degrees C wearing only a swimming costume, hat and goggles. No wetsuit or neoprene is allowed, and severe hypothermia is a real risk.

Kate took on the challenge in aid of Sea-Changers at Andark Lake, helped by a fantastic support team (Rory Fitzgerald, Heather Lunt, Aaron Froom, Matthew Johnston and Lou Walker, plus others from Andark Diving Centre and photographer Terry Scott).

Kate said: "I woke up to a dusting of snow and a howling bitter northerly wind. The snow quickly melted and the sun briefly made an appearance. I had trained hard and just focused on the swim. It was incredibly tough and took

so much out of me. The water was 3.9 degrees C and the wind chill was -1 degrees C. I swam a total of 1650 metres in just under 33 minutes. My support team was amazing and I couldn't have done it without them, they provided safety cover while in the water and, as soon as I completed the swim, helped me to get changed into lots of layers of warm clothing and to recover. Once I started shivering and shaking, they knew I was starting to warm up!"

Kate is a keen open water swimmer and has been winter swimming for several years. She has been swimming in local rivers, the sea and at Andark Lake approximately five days a week for more than two months to train and allow her body to acclimatise to the cold water. In swimming an 'Ice Mile', Kate is fundraising for Sea-Changers, which funds vital projects for UK marine conservation. If you would like to donate, please do so at: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/KateSteelsFryatt>

WORLD'S RAREST TURTLE FOUND IN DEVON

The world's rarest sea turtle has been found washed up on a beach in Devon. The Kemp's ridley turtle - of which there are only 1,000 nesting females left in the world - was found by a beach walker. Ben Read, who is storing the dead animal in his freezer while he waits for a biologist to collect it, told the Telegraph: "The marine biologist knew straight away, as soon as I described the markings, that it could be a Kemp's ridley."

"He said that the turtles originate from Mexico, but are extremely rare and are now critically endangered." Instances of turtles washing up on beaches can be more common during stormy weather and people are advised to seek professional help should they stumble across one. Rehabilitation is often the key, rather than an immediate return to the ocean.

CORRECTION

In last month's issue Donegal was listed in Contents as being in Northern Ireland when in fact it is the northernmost part of Ireland.

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Conservation zone designation to leave UK waters under protected

The UK's leading marine charity says it is hugely disappointed that, in the same week the Government has been warned how England's declining natural environment is harming the economy, it has failed to deliver on promises to better protect English seas.

A total of 37 sites had been proposed to go forward to a second public consultation on Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), all identified by Government's scientific advisers as vital to plugging "major gaps" that currently exist in the development of a UK network.

However, only 23 sites have made the final list when the consultation for potential new MCZs was launched on Friday 30th January. While MCS is keen that members of the public air their views to ensure that these sites become a reality, the charity has real concerns that English seas will not contribute a network of sites that we can be proud of in future.

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) is supported in its criticism by the National Trust, which owns 750 miles of England's coastline. The National Trust says the underwater landscape of England's coastline must be protected in the same way land is and the protection must be put in place now before it's too late. MCS says sound scientific advice has once again been ignored with 14 important sites not included in the consultation. The charity says this tranche had been promoted as one to fill in major gaps, but instead appears to have slowed the MCZ process right down.

"We are alarmed that these proposed MCZs have been shelved, at least for the time being. We believe all of the sites are necessary to achieve the Government's stated commitment to deliver a full network.

Delaying 14 sites means that a number of the UK's iconic marine places are still not protected," says MCS Biodiversity and Fisheries Programme Manager, Dr Peter Richardson. "This decision doesn't match conservation needs, or indeed, the ambition of the public, who continue to demonstrate their support for the establishment of a network of marine protected areas in UK seas. Parties must recommit to a network in their manifestos and deliver this by 2016" Dr Richardson continues.

Simon Pryor, Natural Environment Director

at the National Trust, said: "Steady progress is being made to have a good network of Marine Conservation Zones around the coast of England. However, it's disappointing that we're not even half way to the original target of 127 that the Government outlined just two years ago.

"With good stakeholder buy-in to the original network of 127 MCZs, we believe the Government should have the courage to bring forward the consultation on controversial sites, in order to work through any difficulties", Simon Prior says. "Protecting the seas around the English coast must be a priority as they face unprecedented pressure. Without the protection that they deserve marine wildlife and the quality of our seas will suffer."

Both groups say that important sites missing from the consultation will leave gaps in the network. Studland, Bembridge, Norris to Ryde, and Yarmouth to Cowes have all been dropped putting at risk the future of the spiny seahorse, mantis shrimps and large seagrass meadows. MCS says that all 23 sites being consulted on must be designated. These include well-known Cromer Shoals Chalk Beds referred by many as the "great barrier reef of Norfolk", Farnes East which hosts an array of seabed life such as sea pens, and Newquay and The Gannel known for its crawfish, pink sea fans and migrating eels.

"It's essential that those who care about the future of our seas respond to this consultation by giving their full support for the designation of all 23 MCZ sites announced today, and call for more sites to be proposed to make up a much-needed network of UK marine protected areas," says Dr Richardson.

Last year, NGOs delivered a petition of over 350,000 signatures to the Prime Minister calling for a network of marine protected areas. And over 150 cross-party MPs have signed a Marine Charter calling for an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas. Earlier this week the Natural Capital Committee, an independent advisory group, told the Government that England's natural environment decline is damaging the economy.

MCS and the National Trust are urging their supporters and the wider public to take part in the public consultation by going to:

<http://www.mcsuk.org/mpa>



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KICK OFF THE SEASON AT SCUBAFEST

What better way to kick start the Great British diving season than to head down to St Austell with a whole bunch of like-minded people and sign up for the Cornwall ScubaFest.

For three days over the Spring Bank Holiday - Saturday 2 to Monday 4 May 2015 - scuba divers take over the Pentewan Sands Holiday Park and dive, dance and have a good time. There will be shore diving, RIB diving, hard boat diving, try dives for beginners and rebreather try dives for the more experienced, an underwater photography splash-in competition, workshops for divers and funshops for your non-diving families and friends. In the exhibitors village there are all the top name brands showing their stuff and there will be the chance to trial some of the newest gear. Furthermore, once everyone is out of the water, the après-dive festivities continue long into the night, with hog-roasts, curry and chilli nights, live bands and fancy-dress parties bringing all attendees together in one big, happy family.

So book your camping pitch, sort out your diving and leave the rest of the entertainment to us. The ScubaFests are open to divers and non-divers, with plenty going on to keep certified enthusiasts and those looking to get into the sport fully occupied.

Organised by SITA (Scuba Industry Trade Association), the ScubaFests are actively supported throughout the industry, meaning if you are already a certified diver, it doesn't matter if you gained your qualification with BSAC, PADI, SAA or SSI, you are more than welcome to join in the fun and games and will find plenty of willing dive buddies.

www.scubafest.co.uk

Dates for your diary

There are two ScubaFests in 2015 - Cornwall ScubaFest over the Bank Holiday weekend in early May (2-4 May) and Anglesey ScubaFest in the summer holidays (15-16 August).

Shark sanctuary created in Madagascar

The Government of Madagascar has created the country's first marine sanctuary for sharks as part of a new law to safeguard the country's marine resources, according to the Wildlife Conservation Society.

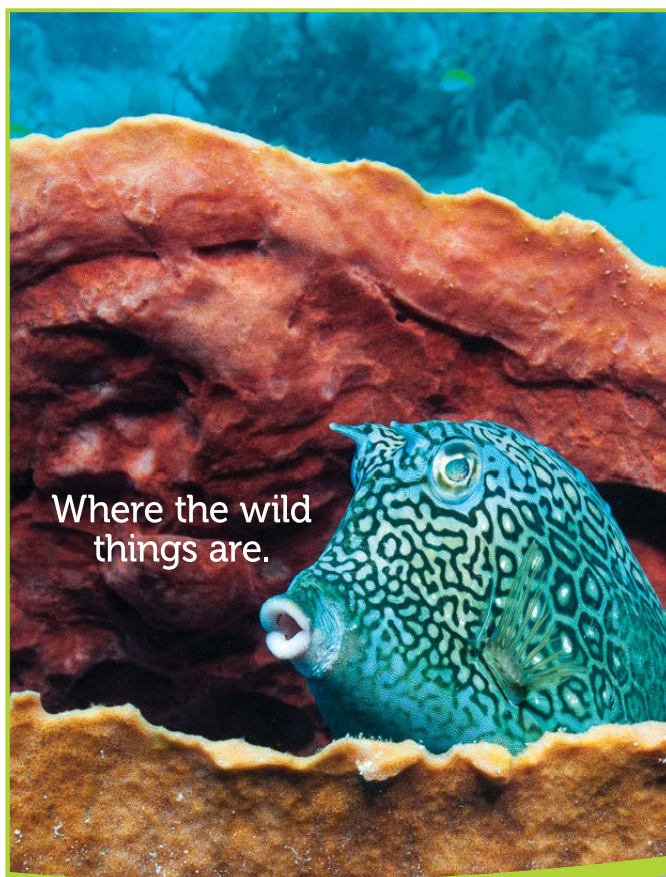
At a 2 February press conference held in Antananarivo, Madagascar, the Malagasy government announced the initiation of a new law that establishes a shark sanctuary in Antongil Bay while granting coastal communities exclusive use and management rights for local fishing areas. The new law also restricts international fishing trawlers from fishing in Antongil Bay, the largest bay in Madagascar. "With the support from Wildlife Conservation Society, we chose a participatory and collaborative approach for the development of this law and management plan and we opted for the search for a balance between fishing activities and ecological integrity to ensure rational and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources" said Mr. Ahmad, Minister of Marine Resources and Fisheries.

"Long-term strategic alliances and partnerships forged with local communities, government agencies such as the Ministry of Marine Resources and Fisheries, and stakeholders during two decades of field presence of WCS investing in wildlife protection and sustain-

able natural resources management in Antongil Bay is key to this success," said Alison Clausen, Country Director of WCS's Madagascar Program.

The WCS Madagascar Program works throughout Madagascar to ensure the long-term conservation of the country's unique biological diversity with a focus on activities in Antongil Bay and other priority landscape/seascapes such as Makira Natural Park, Masoala National Park, Antongil Bay, Nosy Be seascape and the Toliara seascape.

The new shark sanctuary is home to 19 species of shark, a third of which have become severely threatened by unregulated fishing. The new law legally empowers local communities to manage nearshore fishing grounds through a growing network of locally managed marine areas (LMMAs), 25 of which have already been established with the support of WCS. By securing management and use rights of LMMAs for local communities for the first time in Madagascar, the law aims to transform marine resources from open access areas that typically result in short-term exploitation at the expense of long-term sustainability to exclusive access for local fishers who can garner the benefits of managing their own marine resources.



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Sport Diver NEWS

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Fast-track programme to help you Go Pro



Instructor preparing to take students on a dive

The Red Sea Diving College has a long-standing reputation as one of the premiere training facilities in Sharm el Sheikh, and is renowned as a place to train for 'Going Pro'. Whether you decide to go from 'zero to hero' in one swift sweep, or take a slightly more relaxed route to professional diving status, the Red Sea Diving College is the place to go to perfect your skills and to enhance your diver education.

The experienced instructor team is dedicated to Red Sea Diving College's well-earned reputation as a top-quality training facility, and to say they put that little bit extra into courses would be an understatement, as they always give so much more; often adding their own personal experience to help each and every diver achieve their goals.

Many times it is Open Water Divers or, at the other end of the spectrum, instructor candidates, that are tempted by promotions and special offers - the intermediate diver often misses out on deals which fit their needs. The PADI training system is designed to encourage education, but to become a confident diver with buddy experience means dives need to be logged alongside achieving further dive certification goals.

With this in mind, the Red Sea Diving College has decided to launch a 'Rescue to Divemaster fast-track programme'. This package was designed by the Red Sea Diving College's four PADI Course Directors especially to help out divers at the intermediate stage, who want to aim in the future to go professional. A PADI

Rescue Diver needs 40 logged dives to start the Divemaster course, and with potentially only nine dives after the Advanced Open Water Diver course, this can seem a little daunting, especially where local diving opportunities are limited. The RSDC is giving you a kickstart by adding seven extra dives to your logbook with its latest offer.

For as little as €480, you can start your dive holiday on the Red Sea Diving College house reef before getting on to studying for the Emergency First Response course. This is a fun, interactive course to learn CPR and First Aid, so the time flies while you are learning important, potentially lifesaving skills.

The next step in the fast-track package is the PADI Rescue Diver course. The Red Sea Diving College is based directly on the beach, which offers an excellent training area in warm clear water. You will learn some very special Red Sea rescue skills in a real sea environment.

The Red Sea Diving College loves scuba education, but believe it is also important to gain experience, so after your course they have thrown in a special 2+1 dive package, adding a total of seven dives to your logbook.

The final 'cherry on the cake' of encouragement is if you book one of the Red Sea Diving College's 'Rescue to Divemaster fast-track' packages and pre-book your Divemaster within four months of the Rescue Diver course, they will give you an extra ten percent discount on the Divemaster course.

www.redseacollege.com

Sport Diver

MAY ISSUE
ON SALE
Wednesday
8 April

FABULOUS FUERTEVENTURA

Rose and Udo Kefrig check out one of the lesser-known Canary Island dive spots

We explore 'The Rock'

Gibraltar - British diving with a difference

PLUS

- The HSE Media Diver course
- Will Harrison waxes lyrical about the scintillating diving around Komodo, Indonesia
- Walt Stearns marvels at the marine life off Palm Beach, USA
- Group Test: Budget-priced regulators get the once-over by members of the Sport Diver test team
- And not forgetting the latest edition of Underwater Photographer - John McIntyre looks at shooting video at a professional level with a compact rig, as well as reviewing the new Keldan video lights



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Having dived a variety of northern Maldives sites over the years, **AL HORNSBY** decides to venture a little further south - all the way south, in fact - and is astonished by the vibrancy of the underwater life he discovers

Photographs by AL HORNSBY

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My first morning in Havadhu, the southern-most atoll of the Maldives, was a relaxed one. Having arrived the night before on a quick flight from the capital, Male, my diving wouldn't start until later in the afternoon, so I had opted for a speedboat run around the resort's small isle of Falhumaafushi. At the moment I am now remembering, I was hanging over the bow of the boat, camera in hand, only a metre away from a gang of spinner dolphins playing in the wake. They were but a few of Falhumaafushi's huge resident school of spinners that encircled us in all directions, seen daily in the surrounding waters.

When writing and making images for a dive magazine story, my first critical goal is to discover a new location's most unique, most special and most exciting attributes, to serve as the article's essence, its 'hook', its central theme. Lying there in the boat, especially with having already captured some of the best dolphin images of my life, I remember saying to myself: "Wow, this place even has spinner dolphins!" Grinning, I could see that the assignment looked to be an easy one. (But, as they say, little did I know....).

Having dived a lot in the Maldives over the years, I am familiar with the well-known dive areas in the north, but had never been to the deep south. Because of the few dive resorts and liveaboards there, the area just hasn't been dived all that much. Even research had been a challenge. There isn't a lot published about diving in the huge expanse that makes up the two halves of Havadhu Atoll - the Gaafu Alifu and Gaafu Dhaalu districts. What I had seen was interesting, to be sure, often described with words like 'unexplored' and 'undiscovered'. And, considering that the atoll covers some 2,900 sq km, with depths of more than 91m, its being largely unexplored is no great surprise.



Spinner dolphins are just one of the many attractions



Eurodivers' diving dhoni

"The great anticipation, the ethereal, cobalt hues of ultra-clear ocean slowly becoming luminous out of the darkness... the blast of adrenalin as sinuous grey shapes begin to materialise out of the deepest blue imaginable"



Views don't get much more idyllic than this!

That first afternoon's diving was at a spot named Dahaadoo. Just a few minutes from the resort, it became my favourite site, and I dived it several times during my visit. The place's description will sound generally familiar to Maldives' diving veterans - it's a steep, coral-encrusted wall with lots of big gorgonian fans and sponges, riddled by overhangs and crevices. The dive is a drift along the wall on the incoming tide, ending in an exciting rush into and through a pass on the rising current. More to the point, however, was the incredible array of life we passed through on every dive there. We saw green turtles, trevally, dog-tooth tuna and reef fish in large numbers; white-tip sharks were numerous and grey reef sharks patrolled the wall in deeper water. Once inside the pass, leopard sharks and huge marbled rays could always be found. What kept bringing me back, however, was the surprising number of eagle rays. On that first dive, we saw several schools, but they weren't close enough for good images (eagle rays are notorious for gliding along a wall, then turning to quickly get out of photographic range as they approach divers).

My next dive was planned specifically for getting eagle ray images. However, unbeknownst to me, this was my day to be taunted by those teasing, cruel dive gods that every photographer has been tormented



Divers celebrate seeing a hammerhead shark



Massive gorgonian sea fans

“Suddenly, I heard Mathew yelling into his regulator, and I turned to see him giving me a wild, flapping-wings signal for eagle rays”

by at least once. We were heading down the wall at 20m and came upon a huge overhang with a low cavern way in the back. My guide, Mathew, noticed a big green turtle wedged into the furthest, low-ceilinged corner. It looked like a great image, so I slowly crept in over the bottom rubble, squeezing in close in the narrow space. Suddenly, I heard Mathew yelling into his regulator, and I turned to see him giving me a wild, flapping-wings signal for eagle rays. I began exiting backwards as quickly (excruciatingly slowly, I should say) as I could, arriving at the outer edge only soon enough to see the tail-ends of five small eagles that had just passed at an arm's length out from our ledge. It was one of those moments. Had I not been squeezed into the back of the overhang, they would have naively, slowly, calmly passed less than a metre from me, where they would have been fully lit by my strobes, etc, etc - you get the picture. Angst aside, however, we didn't give up, because we knew that eagle rays sometimes loop around, making repeat passes over the same area. Determined, we settled down at the edge of the ledge to wait. After nearly 15 minutes, with air dwindling and a lot of dive up the channel yet ahead of us, we decided to move on. Before leaving however, I decided to at least get the image of the turtle that had caused me so much misery. Once again, I squeezed back into the corner, and just when close and ready to shoot... you guessed

it! Mathew began yelling into his regulator, and I turned to see the eagles pass, once again just a metre away from our lonely ledge. Even with all this, after only a short distance further along the wall, a big eagle came gliding in, giving me an eagle ray image like I had never made before. At that point, I remember thinking: “Wow, this place even has eagle rays!” Grinning, I could see that this assignment...

A couple days later, Francesco, Euro Divers manager, casually asked: “Would you like to go with the staff on an early-morning hammerhead dive tomorrow? We'll head out at 5:30am.” My huge grin was all the answer he needed. This dive was a very special one, with, on average, about a one in three chance of seeing the resident school of hammerheads on any given dive. For something so unique - hammerheads in open water before dawn - those odds were ones I would take any time. In full darkness, we entered the water off the tip of a small island near a pass to open sea. The dive plan was to drop down quietly with no lights, in a close group, to 22m, then follow a compass course toward the isle's reefline, with a 12-15 minute swim to arrive just before dawn. If the hammerheads were there, a scout would approach, and if we were sufficiently quiet and calm, the rest of the school would move in. To be deep in the heart of the sea on dives like these is an unworldly experience. The great anticipation, the ethereal, cobalt hues of ultra-clear ocean slowly becoming luminous out of the darkness... the blast of adrenalin as sinuous grey shapes begin to materialise out of the deepest blue imaginable (this particular morning, it turned out to be a pack of grey reef sharks rather than hammerheads, but who cared?). Then, the startling, golden searchlights of dawn's first shifting rays of sunlight as they begin sweeping down from the moving ocean's surface. These sorts of dive moments remind you of just how special it is to be a diver, with one's buddies witnessing the rare and truly beautiful. At that point, drifting there in the glow, I remember thinking: “Wow, this place even has hammerheads!” Grinning, I could see...

That same evening, I was invited on another special dive, a 'Flo Dive', conducted on the house reef just out from The Residence Resort's water bungalows (a very nice dive or snorkel spot, especially when spinner

THRESHER SHARK DIVERS

Malapascua, Philippines

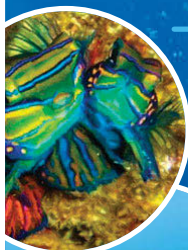
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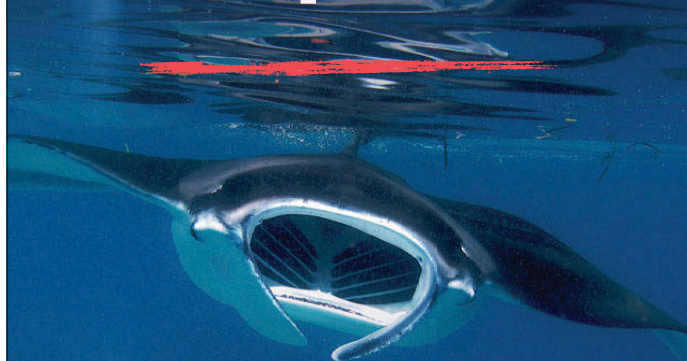


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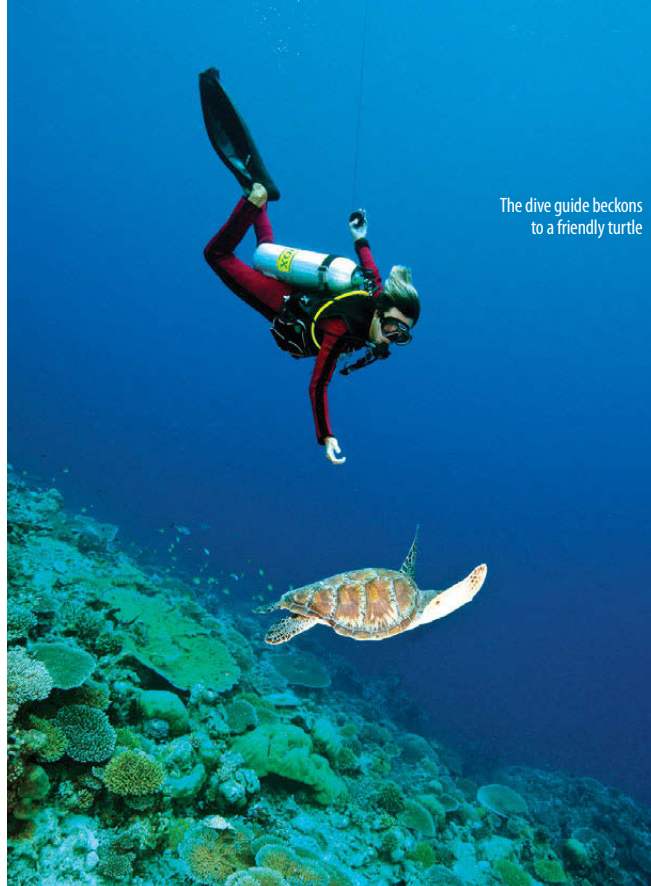
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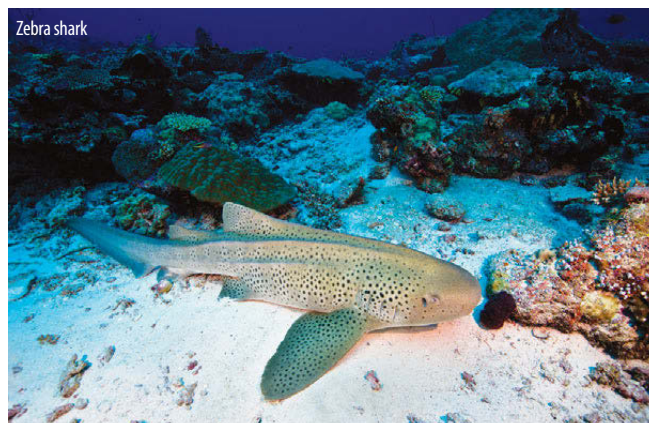


The dive guide beckons to a friendly turtle

dolphins swim by). This night dive is conducted for snorkelers on the reef-top, for divers at shallow depths below.

While we've all probably heard of fluorescent corals, how many of us have ever had the opportunity to experience them? It's basically this: many corals and creatures on a reef, under an intense blue LED light and viewed through a mask (and camera, by the way) with a yellow filter, go ultra-fluorescent, changing a reef into a wild, unimaginable scene, like something out of the movie *Avatar*. Corals turn day-glow lime-green, orange, yellow and metallic rose; crinoids become the reef's most crazily gaudy creatures, in brilliant hues of scarlet, iridescent purple and sapphire. Many small, reef creatures and fish become practically unrecognisable in weird, brilliant luminosity. And, once you figure out the settings, the photographic images can be amazing. Floating there that night, I remember thinking: "Wow, this place even has fluorescent corals!" Grinning...

My final favourite dive was at Kuredhdoo, a rambling, jumbled reef deeply overgrown with corals of every description, and with so many different reef fish the site could have easily been named 'The aquarium'. In a secluded spot, a pair of three-metre-long tawny nurse sharks lay



Zebra shark

cuddled in a crevice, one with a pectoral fin thrown across the other in a seeming lover's embrace. Down where the reef rose up from an 18m-deep, sand bottom dotted with isolated coral heads, it was ray city - with big, marbled rays, thorny rays, whip rays and more. Leopard sharks lay here and there, and as we swam, a small school of pygmy devil rays flew by overhead. And, while off-gassing in the reef-shallows at dive's end, we found a huge patch of anemones covering at least 50 sq metres, with several species of anemone fish. The final topper was a pass by a small group of spinner dolphins, who gave us a curious look-over before moving on. Hanging there, recalling the week, I remember thinking: "Wow, this place has more species of rays than any place I have ever seen, along with sharks, turtles, spinner dolphins, fluorescent corals, macro-critters and just about everything else, not to mention the utter comfort of the resort and the 'effortless-diving' service making it all so easy to enjoy..." Frowning, it finally struck me - this assignment had become really difficult. How could I possibly decide the article's essence, its hook, its central theme?

That became both the challenge and the ultimate answer in describing this marvellous place. With all that I found in my few days there, plus considering that in various times of the year both whalesharks and mantas are also seen, and that big, unusual pelagics are fairly common on the long, seldom-dived stretches of the lagoon's outer reefline (a friend of mine recently encountered a huge black marlin out there), this area simply defies simple, specific definition. As it is dived and explored more fully, it seems destined not to become known for having some particular something, but instead to become known for having a whole lot of many, many things. "Wow," does seem to say it rightly enough. ■

AI was assisted on this trip by The Residence Maldives (www.cenizaro.com/theresidence) and Euro Divers (www.eurodivers.com)

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PADI NEWS

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The PADI Diving Society has been in existence since 1997, and from humble beginnings has grown substantially, within a few years reaching the heady heights of 'world's biggest diving club'. With membership now standing at over 180,000 keen, active divers across the planet, the PADI Diving Society represents a formidable 'tribe'.

Now all three sectors of the PADI Diving Society - Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe, Middle East and Africa - have moved from been connected but fractured, uniting under a global banner and becoming one entity, with a unified approach and single magazine title reaching all members, everywhere. The magazines in each region will be targeted at their members, with reports and features on dive sites throughout their turf, plus tantalising glimpses of what lies across the world. Benefits and Society partners will also remain regional, but there is now the opportunity for a global focus, giving PADI Diving Society members the chance to make great savings wherever they travel through the scuba world.

SIMON SAYS...

Simon R Chance, manager, PADI Diving Society, and executive, PADI Retailer and Resort Associations

NEW BRAND AMBASSADOR FOR DIVESANGHA

PADI Diving Society benefit partners, Divesangha, have been building on their early successes, and the range of cool, practical lifestyle wear is gaining ground as a 'must pack' for divers and their families on many a liveaboard or exotic trip. Their close association with the tribal nature of diving, and a sense of being at one with nature and the community - "sangha" even translates as "community" in the world's oldest languages - has also taken a step forward recently, with freediving champion Rebecca Coales joining them as Brand Ambassador.

I was lucky enough to meet up with Bristol-based Rebecca while visiting Lucia Keen, Divesangha's founder, on her booth at the London show recently. Already able to boast five National records for "Dynamic Apnea" - freediving disciplines for which her latest record involved swimming nearly four lengths of the Olympic pool in Manchester on a single, held breath! - Rebecca is now aiming for higher (longer?) things, and heading for Europe where she is bound to meet with further success. To see Rebecca in action, check out coach Steve Millard's video of her record-breaking swim at <https://vimeo.com/113217686>; even holding a breath for that long is by no means easy, but swimming and turning with a monofin at the same time really adds to the impression factor. As you may see in News this month, Rebecca's next challenge is the World Championships in Belgrade, Serbia from 19-25 June, 2015 - and we can help put her on the top podium! All athletes need funding to cover the costs of training, travel and the astonishing amount of background organisation required to help them reach their peak for the events like the



Worlds. Besides the assistance and exposure Rebecca can garner from her association with partners such as Divesangha and Aqua Lung (her record was set in an Aqua Lung Freedive suit), a crowd funding project has been set up at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/breathless which, we trust, will see support coming from all over to boost Rebecca's success at these and other events.

Rebecca ranked 4th in the world last year. Let's help her peak at the Worlds and bring back another 1st and, don't forget, while few of us will ever look quite as good as ultra-fit and yoga-toned Rebecca, we can at least share her style in Divesangha gear - and save 15% off our Divesangha purchases as PADI Diving Society members!

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With more than 40 years experience, over 135,000 PADI professionals and more than 6,000 dive shops and resorts worldwide, PADI training materials and services let you experience scuba diving from nearly anywhere. Scuba diving with PADI instructors, dive centres and resorts can help transform your life through education, experience, equipment and environmental conservation.

THE VALUE OF FIRST-AID TRAINING

MICK TURNER FROM REEFERS AND WRECKERS DIVE CENTRE EXPLAINS HOW A CLUB LIVEABOARD TRIP TO EGYPT TURNED INTO SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT

After two days aboard a liveaboard while taking in the beautiful dive sites of the Red Sea, we were approaching the world-famous dive site of the SS Thistlegorm - little did we know of the events that were about to unfold... Upon arrival we could see one of the boats already moored over the Thistlegorm was in difficulty, with smoke billowing from her engine room while the crews from her and the surrounding vessels were frantically trying to put the fire out. At one point I counted ten Zodiacs buzzing between the different liveaboards, one of which ran over and injured a crew member who was in the water. He sustained cuts to his leg, but made a full recovery. After hours of manic kit moving and passenger ferrying, the fire was under control. I believe it was eventually the on-board CO2 system that extinguished the fire, but the constant opening of the hatch to see if the fire had gone out didn't help matters! The crew did everything they could with the quite-apparent minimal amount of training that they had received. They cannot be praised enough! The crew and guests thought everything was under control, but things took a horrific turn for the worse... As I looked over the side of the boat I noticed that one of the crew who had just come out of the engine room, where he had been fighting the fire, was having difficulty standing and breathing. It was at this point that I notified my wife, Sally Turner, a respiratory nurse. Sally administered oxygen via one of the portable units that we had borrowed from one of the other boats, but we needed to get him to a stable environment. We persuaded the crew to take him to our boat via the dive deck, where we laid him on top of the towels that the rest of our guests had been busy collecting. Sally was joined by Jo Bacon, a dental hygienist. It was then that the unthinkable happened and two more casualties came onto our boat, though not as serious as the first. One was the captain suffering from burns to his feet, and the other from smoke inhalation. It is probably also worth mentioning that help had not yet been called for, even though it was at least half an hour since the first casualty. It took Sally to



explain that he would die unless we got help. Sally and Jo managed the situation and directed Sarah Drake, Gary McGuigan and myself to a position where we would be most effective. Sarah calmed and stayed with one of the casualties while Gary and I looked after the captain and tried to patch together another oxygen system, which turned out to be brute strength/adrenaline and moving the 50-litre oxygen cylinders around the boat! Gary's greatest moment was persuading the now-shocked and panicked crew to leave their injured friends in the hands of two strange blonde ladies! Sally then noticed the first victim was going to arrest and advised that we needed to move him into the salon, where they could administer CPR. At this point they were joined by a doctor who was a guest on one of the other boats. Sally and Jo performed CPR twice and saved the victim's life. I have to say this is the first time I have seen this and I can only imagine how they felt both during and after the event. He was kept on oxygen until the Egyptian medical services arrived, which was over two hours after the events began to unfold. All three casualties made a full recovery. The events were not the fault of anyone - all the crew, staff and guests did everything within their training - but it does make me wonder about the outcome if there had not been trained professionals on the boat! Reefers and Wreckers are extremely proud of everyone; they are a credit to the dive centre.

LEADING THE WAY



Congratulations as always to our latest PADI Master Scuba Divers, whose achievements have been highlighted to us in the last month or so:

- Ron Hall, Launceston, Cornwall
- Colin Jones, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, Wales
- Matt Pearson, Heanor, Derbyshire

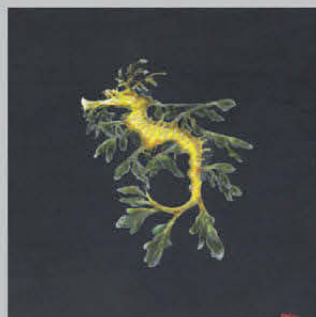
Colin's journey has been nicely varied, starting with a Discover programme while in the Maldives with the Army (thanks for your service, Colin!), then back in the UK where he found Karen and Gareth at West Wales Divers virtually next door, helping him along his chosen development path. Colin's latest achievement was gained on holiday at Pissouri Divers in Cyprus; next stop, PADI Divemaster...?

The prestigious Master Scuba Diver certification - the highest non-professional certification awarded by PADI - recognizes a diver's mastery of personal diving skills in a minimum of five different Diver Specialty areas, as well as their ability to demonstrate dependable Rescue and Emergency Responder techniques. Not surprisingly, given our shared commitment to diving and all things aquatic, a significant number of PADI Diving Society members have either achieved this award already, or are currently working towards achieving it. If you would like to know more about the PADI Master Scuba Diver programme, contact your local PADI Professional, or visit PADI's website via <http://tinyurl.com/PADIMasterDiver>

Well done once again to all PADI Master Scuba Divers, wherever you are!



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To learn more about PADI Touch products, contact your local PADI Dive Center or Resort or visit www.padi.com



About the movement

Project AWARE Foundation is a growing movement of scuba divers protecting the ocean planet – one dive at a time. Over the past two decades of underwater conservation we've learned that divers are true leaders in ocean protection. We're ocean heroes numbering in the millions across the globe. We believe together our actions will make a huge impact and will help to rescue the ocean.

MY OCEAN NEWS

DOMINO ALBERT, MANAGER PROJECT AWARE EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA



The ocean is an incredible resource - it gives us life, food, recreation and is home to some of the most-majestic and mind-blowing species on the planet, yet less than three percent is protected. Part of my role at Project AWARE is to raise awareness of the threats our oceans are facing and inspire divers to make lasting environmental changes - one dive at a time.

One of my biggest concerns is the growing gap between people involved in marine protection and the general public. Not everybody gets the full scale of the problems faced by our ocean. Issues such as climate change, wildlife extinction and plastic pollution often feel so vast, vague and distant that we lose sight of them in our daily lives. Solving any one of them, let alone all of them, can feel impossible and can easily drive people to inaction. Through the Project AWARE #WhatILoveAbouttheOcean campaign, which took our Social Media channels by storm in February, we wanted to celebrate what the ocean means to us, divers, to help inspire people to protect what we love. By encouraging divers everywhere to share their favourite ocean picture, we created an awe-inspiring photo grid which shows how important and beautiful the ocean is, and reminds us why the Project AWARE movement is fighting every day for ocean protection.

Tweet us: #WhatILoveAbouttheOcean

MAKING WAVES FOR GRASSROOTS CONSERVATION

BY HANNAH PRAGNELL-RAASCH, PROGRAM AND OUTREACH CO-ORDINATOR, PROJECT AWARE

With ever-increasing threats to our ocean planet, working globally and acting locally has never been so important. Project AWARE's Ocean Action Project empowers ocean communities to take local conservation actions to a whole new level of change. Let's take a moment to look back on some of the fantastic Ocean Action Projects from 2014 that have been contributing to grassroots conservation efforts around the world, taking action to combat marine debris and protect sharks and rays. Here's a snapshot of what they've achieved so far - fins up to them!

What Goes Around Comes Around - The Plastic Ocean Project, USA

From schools to colleges to national park nature centres, the travelling art exhibit 'What Goes Around Comes Around' visited 14 cities across the United States as an Ocean Action Project Winner. Travelling over 5,600 miles, Bonnie and her team engaged and educated over 50,000 people from various walks of life about the critical issue of marine debris and the impact it's having on our precious marine life and habitats. They also got their hands dirty, removing over 400lbs of rubbish from beaches and rivers along the way. The art exhibit is now on permanent display at the Nature Centre at McCormick's Falls National Park, Indiana, USA. The team have more planned, so keep your eye out for the 2015 tour.

Thailand eShark Project - Shark Guardian, Thailand

The Thailand eShark Project has successfully launched the first-ever diver-focused shark sighting program database in Thailand. During the first season, they received over 4,400 records of sightings and no-sightings data for multiple shark species in and around Thai waters. The data that has been collected to date and will be continued to be collected moving forward, will be invaluable in developing and increasing protections and conservation measures for vulnerable shark species. The data is being shared with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as well as the Thai Fisheries Department in order to achieve a longer-term goal of establishing the first-ever protected shark sanctuaries in Thailand. Additionally, by working with the Thai Fisheries Department, the data will also



Photo courtesy of Blue Guru Conservation

contribute to developing a National Plan of Action for Sharks. These are fantastic positive moves forward for Thai shark conservation measures, which will also have global benefits due to the migratory nature of many shark species.

Protecting Sharks and Rays from Fishing Boats in the Andaman Sea - Blue Guru Conservation, Thailand

Since 2012, Blue Guru Conservation have been recording shark, ray and fishing boat numbers encountered in the North Andaman Sea, including Surin National Park and Koh Phra Thong. The funding through Project AWARE's Ocean Action Project has enabled this valuable monitoring to continue, collecting another years of valuable data developing an accurate perspective about how sharks, rays and other vulnerable marine animals are being impacted by fishing boats in the area. Almost 400 sightings records were submitted last season which demonstrated a surprising increase in shark and ray sightings compared to 2012/2013 season. They also experienced the highest level of whaleshark sightings over the past six years. While firm conclusions cannot yet be drawn to explain the figures, Blue Guru Conservation will continue their monitoring program over the coming years in order to determine any patterns and possible causes. Data has been shared with key Thai nationals including the owner of Surin National Park and a leading Thai politician in order to inform decisions regarding shark conservation measures and management of fishing in the area. Additionally, data is being shared with Ecocean and Shark Trust in order to enable international research into the migration patterns.

Thank you to all the amazing Ocean Action Project winners. Keep up the great work in 2015!

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DISCOVERY

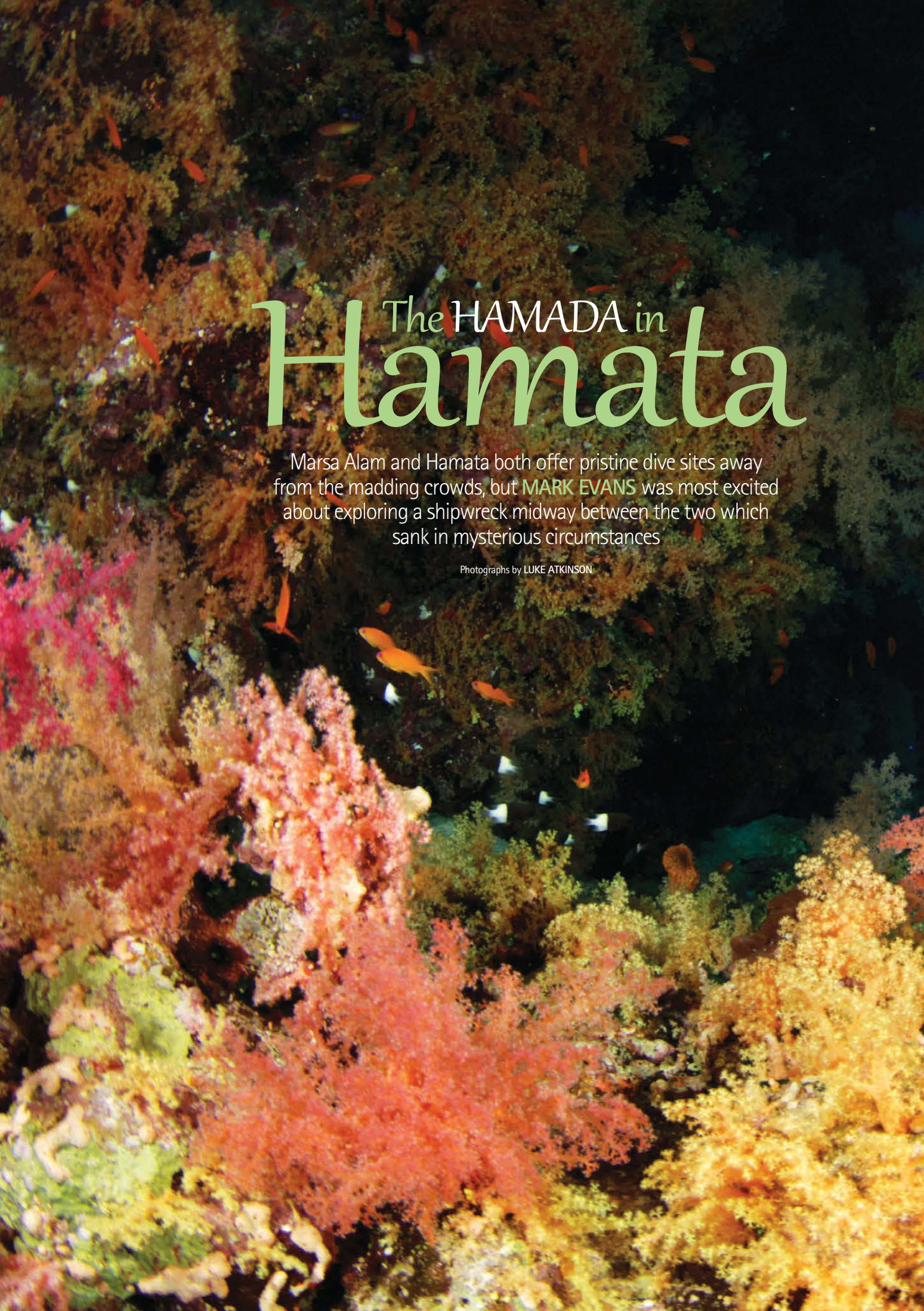


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The HAMADA in Hamata

Marsa Alam and Hamata both offer pristine dive sites away from the madding crowds, but **MARK EVANS** was most excited about exploring a shipwreck midway between the two which sank in mysterious circumstances

Photographs by LUKE ATKINSON



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The stern section of the Hamada



Port Ghalib and Marsa Alam used to be considered the 'Deep South' in Egypt, but now visiting divers have the opportunity to venture even further down the coast - some 180km to be exact - to the quiet, sleepy diving resort of Hamata, which has the mighty Fury Shoals right on its doorstep. There are a small number of hotels, a few restaurants and a marina; then it's you, nature, the beach, relaxation and the clear Red Sea waters.

If you fancy the sound of Hamata, but don't want to be so secluded for an entire week, then you can combine a few days in the laidback resort with the remainder of your trip in one of the hotels in Port Ghalib, which will give you access to a selection of bars and restaurants, although being this far south, it is still very chilled out and doesn't boast the nightlife of Sharm or Hurghada. For divers, this is a great way to maximise what dive sites you can hit, as with Emperor Divers offering house reef, RIB and boat diving from both locations, and the resorts being so far apart, you won't get any crossover.

I was in Egypt to join a liveaboard to the Brothers and Daedalous, but having a few days on land either side of the week-long trip, I was able to join Emperor's Area Manager Luke Atkinson for a whistle-stop tour of what they have to offer in both locations.

Marsa Alam

First up were a couple of dips on the house reef in Port Ghalib, which is located close to the Palace and Sahara Sands Hotels. The lengthy reef has three entry and exit points, offering five very different dive profiles. The all-weather beach entry is great for those who want an easy dive from start to finish, while the two jetties provide access to deep blue water right from the off. Depending on experience, guests can either go guided or unguided on the house reef, which is open from 8am to 5.45pm (or sunset). Guided dives usually take place at 9.30am and 2pm.

It was nice to see pristine corals and plentiful marine life this close to the marina - the house reef literally lies along one side of the entrance channel - and as well as all the usual Red Sea reef dwellers, such as masked pufferfish, blue-spotted lagoon rays, angelfish, moray eels,

butterflyfish, anemonefish, crocodilefish, lionfish, snapper and grouper, we were also repeatedly buzzed by a nice-sized eagle ray. Apparently, dolphins and even manta rays have been seen on the house reef. For any non-divers in your party, much of the coral and fish life comes right to the surface, so snorkelers will be in their element.

Boat diving out of Port Ghalib takes divers to sites such as Marsa Shouna, Ras el Torfa and Marsa Mubarak, which are suitable for all levels of diver and boast plentiful corals and marine life.

Special day trips from Marsa Alam include Abu Dabab, where you can encounter massive green turtles and occasionally dugongs; the world-famous Elphinstone, with its ripping currents, sheer walls and oceanic whitetip sharks (at the right time of year); and Sha'ab Samadai, a horseshoe-shaped reef often called Dolphin House thanks to its resident pod of spinner dolphins.

I was staying at the newly-built Resta Club Marine View hotel in the heart of Port Ghalib. Close to the marina and the boats, Emperor provides transfers to and from the dive boats, but the Resta Club runs buggies to the nearby beach as well.

Hamata

It was interesting to explore the house reef in Port Ghalib, but I'd been in Marsa Alam several times before, and so I was excited to jump in the car and venture south to Hamata, as this was virgin territory for me.

Emperor Divers is ideally located right on the beach of the Zabargad Berenice Resort, and to access the house reef you just have to grab your kit, stroll down the newly renovated jetty and take a giant stride into the welcoming waters of the Red Sea. Again, as with Port Ghalib, the house reef is open from 8am to 5.45pm (or sunset), and guided or unguided options are available.

The house reef here is much more dramatic than Marsa Alam, with sections of sheer wall and overhangs, interspersed with coral heads and sand channels, leading on to a sand-and-coral-rubble slope head-



Dugongs sometimes put in an appearance

"This, combined with the light filtering down through the shallow water, makes it particularly photogenic, and it is easy to see why this is a huge favourite with underwater photographers"

ing off into the depths. As with the Marsa Alam house reef, there are all the usual fish suspects in evidence, but being fed with nutrients from currents sweeping up the coast, there are also some impressive plumes of vibrant soft corals and sponges adorning the hard coral. With deep water right on hand, large pelagic species are often seen cruising in the blue, so keep one eye open as you bumble along the reef.

The Zabargad Berenice Resort itself is built in typical Moorish style and set in gardens amid a rugged backdrop. The main dining room has great views over the large pool, beach and gardens, while the Divers' Bar is a great place to share diving tales with a 'deco' beer.

We didn't have time to go out on a dayboat, but these are handily located just a three-minute minibus transfer away at the Hamata Marina. Dive sites within easy reach include better-known locations such as Sha'ab Claudio, Abu Galawa Soraya and Abu Galawa Kebir, which liveaboard veterans might remember hitting during a Deep South voyage, as well as lesser-known sites such as the Qula'an Islands.

Special full-day boat trips include Sha'ab Sataya, a huge natural lagoon formed by a massive reef rising from the depths and famed for its huge pods of spinner dolphins; Sha'ab Maksur, a large and varied reef with steep drop-offs and strong currents that is often compared to the revered Elphinstone; and the 'Best of Fury Shoals', which makes the most of the fact that this fantastic region - once only visited by liveaboards - is close by, and offers three dives, including one each at the famed sites Malahi and Gota Sataya Soraya.

However, I was most looking forward to a trip which is offered from both Marsa Alam and Hamata, and centres around the shipwreck of a 65-metre-long coaster. And best of all, it lies in just 15m and is accessible from the shore! In fact, with it rising to within a few metres of the surface, it can even be seen by snorkellers!

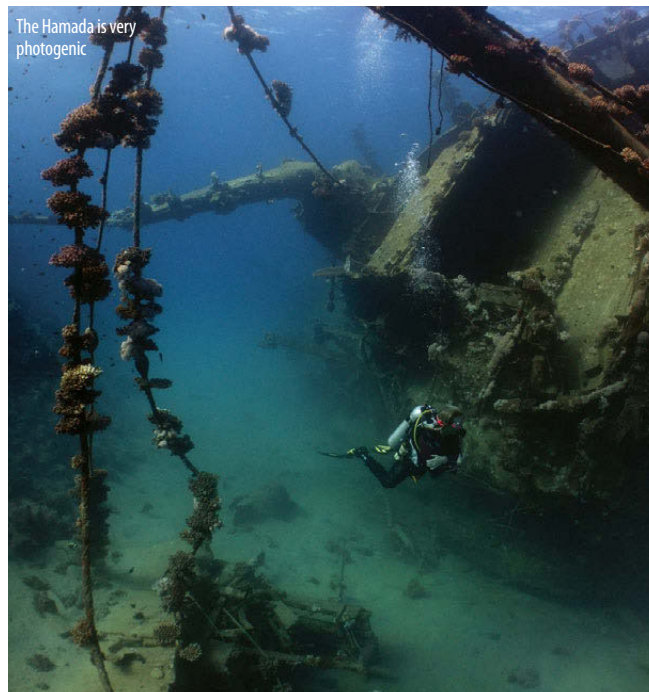
Being a certified wreck-head, I couldn't wait to see the Hamada, which Luke had promised would blow me away when it loomed out of the blue. And true to his word, a few minutes swim from the beach entry, he brought me in directly on to the dramatic stern section, with its intact propeller, which is reminiscent of the Gianni D.

The Hamada had an eventful history. Built in Aberdeen, the vessel was launched on 15 March 1965 bearing the name Avocet, and plied the waters of the UK into the mid-1970s. It was then sold and ended up in Cyprus, initially being named the Afroditi H, then the Samarah and finally, in 1985, the Hamada, and the following year it was sold to a

"With deep water right on hand, large pelagic species are often seen cruising in the blue, so keep one eye open as you bumble along the reef"

DID YOU KNOW...

Emperor Divers offers free transfers from Hurghada Airport to Marsa Alam with their Free Ride Friday promotion - check out www.emperordivers.com for details.



company in Malta. There are multiple stories about the loss of the ship, which was on a voyage from Jeddah to Suez on 28 June 1993 - one report says it caught fire and sank in deep water, others that it stuck a submerged object out at sea. However, whatever came to pass in reality, we now know that it ended up in shallow water in Abu Ghusun.

The wreck is now split into two parts, with the stern section being the most 'shipshape', and though it has only been down 22 years, it is covered in hard and soft coral growth, and boasts a rich selection of marine life in and around it. This, combined with the light filtering down through the shallow water, makes it particularly photogenic, and it is easy to see why this is a huge favourite with underwater photographers. With good gas consumption and an optimum nitrox mix, you could spend ages exploring and shooting on this wreck. One thing - have a look on the beach around the entry/exit point and you will find tiny plastic granules, which were being transported in the holds of the Hamada when it came to grief. ■

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

MARSA ALAM AND HAMATA, EGYPT



WHERE IS IT?

The deep south of Egypt, towards the border with Sudan.

HOW TO GET THERE

There are flights direct from the UK into Marsa Alam International Airport and Hurghada Airport. Marsa Alam is obviously the closest option, being a stone's throw from Port Ghalib, but Hurghada is only a three-hour minibus transfer. Hamata is then another two hours or so south of Port Ghalib.

WHEN TO VISIT

You can dive out of Port Ghalib and Hamata all year round.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

You can purchase a visa on arrival at the airport for US\$25.

CURRENCY

Egyptian pound (£1 = LE11.60).

WHERE TO EAT AND MEET

In Port Ghalib, there are a selection of bars and restaurants, as well as those within the hotels, and the same - though more limited - in Hamata.

VERDICT

Marsa Alam/Port Ghalib and particularly Hamata offer a taste of days gone by, with few tourists, fewer dive boats and healthy reefs to explore.

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wakatobi

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ALIENS AMONG US: At Wakatobi, encounters with glowing, other-worldly creatures happen every day

With eight arms growing out of their heads, and three hearts pumping blue blood through their pliable, gelatinous bodies, cuttlefish may seem like creatures from another planet, but they actually thrive in abundant numbers on the colourful reefs of Wakatobi.

They could be lurking close by, blending in perfectly with the coral reef or a sea grass bed. But unless a cuttlefish chooses to reveal itself, you could swim right by this alien-like creature without even knowing it was there. Sometimes referred to as 'the chameleon of the sea', cuttlefish have a remarkable ability to rapidly alter their skin colour and patterning at will - sometimes seeming to disappear among their surroundings, then suddenly exploding in a pulsating display of moving light that can hypnotise prey or signal to others of their kind.

Like other cephalopods such as octopus and squid, cuttlefish have specialised pigment cells in their skin called chromatophores. These cells are infused with multi-coloured pigment particles that are activated by the nervous system or by hormonal signals. Their skin also contains a second type of cell known as iridophores, which reflect and refract light in ways that result in silvery or iridescent colours, and make the cuttlefish's skin appear to flash luminous, much like a strobe light.

The same chameleon-like abilities that allow cuttlefish to control their colour and skin texture and blend with the reef or sea bottom, also provide them with a means of communication, whether to attract a mate,

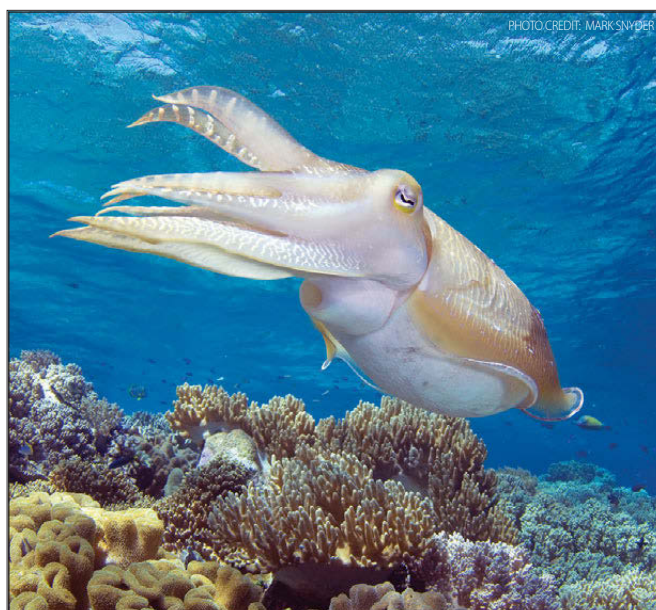
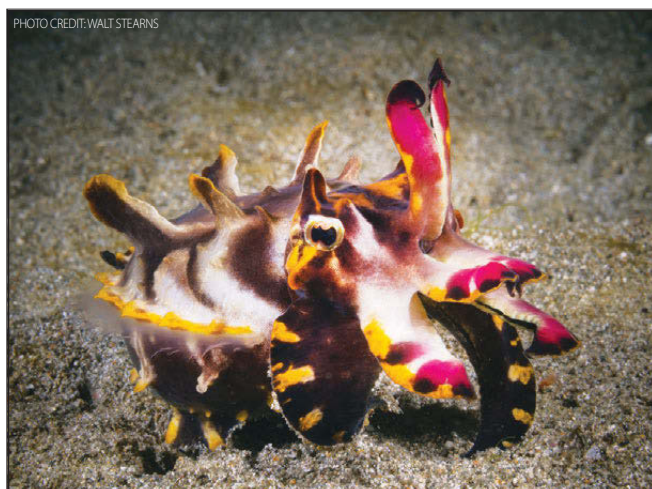
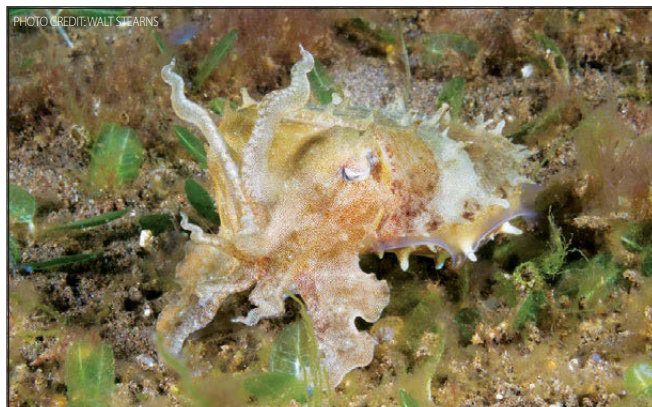
warn off rival cuttlefish or even stage a performance to confuse their prey. At their most spectacular, cuttlefish may cycle through colour and pattern changes so rapidly that their skin will actually pulse, as if they are sending electrically charged waves of light and dark through their bodies, adjusting the rhythm from slow to fast to slow again.



At Wakatobi, there's a chance of finding cuttlefish on any dive. Their range extends from the shallow grass beds to deep reefs, and everything in between. When cuttlefish are in camouflage mode, it will take a very sharp eye to spot them, as they can blend almost perfectly into their surroundings. On the other hand, if they choose to reveal themselves, they are hard to miss, as they will often rise up from the bottom and start flashing bright colour patterns. It's as if the switch was flipped on a battery-powered strobe light.

When you see a cuttlefish, look around, because it's probably not alone. While juveniles are more likely to remain solitary, adult cuttlefish usually travel in groups of two or more, and it's not unusual to find a half dozen moving in loose formation. By revealing themselves, cuttlefish have decided that you are not a potential threat. If you wish to approach for a closer

look, you will need to maintain that non-threatening impression by moving slowly and patiently, without making any sudden or aggressive movements. Sometimes, it is the cuttlefish themselves who will move closer, as they seem to be naturally curious when not threatened. The cuttlefish you are most likely to see around Wakatobi is the broadclub, which can reach lengths of more than a foot. Guests who



take a cruise on the Pelagian also stand a good chance of seeing the aptly-named flamboyant cuttlefish during night dives. This species is nocturnal, spending their days buried in the type of soft sea floor sediment found on muck diving sites around Buton Island, and emerging predominantly under the cover of darkness.

Though they are among the cleverest and most elusive creatures in the sea, cuttlefish are not immune to human impacts. In many parts of the world, cuttlefish are fished for food, and also to harvest the internal shell known as a cuttlebone, which is used in the pet trade to provide caged birds with a calcium-rich pecking supplement. Fortunately, cuttlefish are not yet considered to be threatened or endangered, and they do especially well in protected areas such as Wakatobi's private marine preserve.

When visiting Wakatobi, be ready for a cuttlefish encounter, as you never know when these sleek, iridescent hunters will reveal themselves. And if you can imagine that cuttlefish are extraterrestrials who came to earth, then hovering weightless as you watch one of these strange creatures pulsate in other-worldly colour patterns might well be as close as you can ever come to visiting another planet. ■

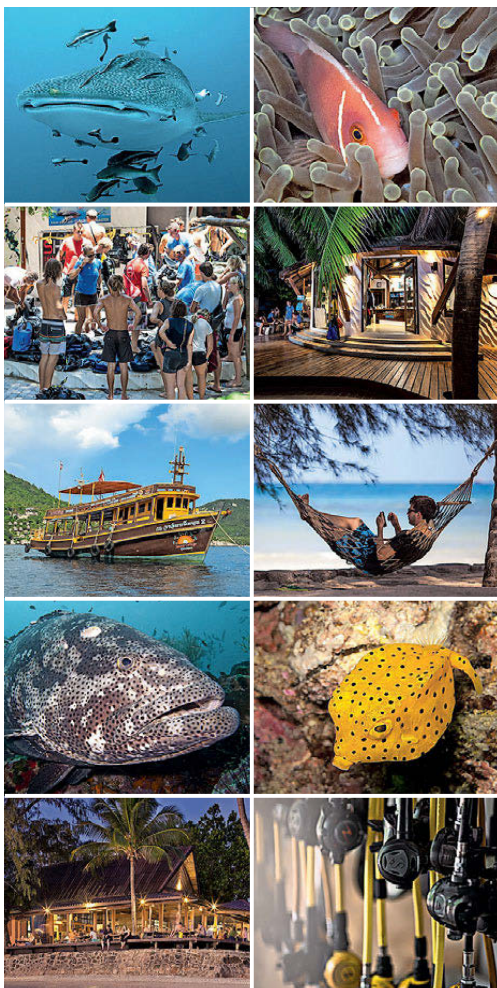




THE LAST *frontier*

STUART PHILPOTT visits mystical Papua New Guinea,
a place of wilderness, world-class diving and pigs

Photographs by STUART PHILPOTT



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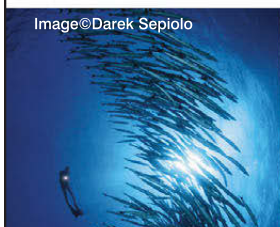
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When the bus driver ran over a squealing pig my fate had well and truly been sealed. In Papua New Guinea (PNG) pigs are pretty much sacred animals. On the grand scale of economy there is land, pigs and women, in that descending order. I had just landed at Hoskins Airport on West New Britain for the first leg of my journey and already some kindred tribal spirit would probably be cursing my every move. I was on my way to Walindi Plantation Resort at Kimbe Bay, and sure enough 20 miles down the road we had a flat tyre. I use the word 'road' quite loosely as the main highway was a mixture of gravel, broken tarmac and the odd crater-sized pothole, which in this case, had found our tyre. Other 'mishaps' followed but non-stop rain, a burst ear drum and the worst Marmite I have ever tasted couldn't dampen my spirits, in fact, this just made the whole adventure far more memorable.

It's fair to say that PNG is not a package holiday destination. There are no purpose built resorts bustling with bars and restaurants. PNG is pure Indiana Jones country, screaming with raw nature. I met up with Doug, an Aussie geologist, who said PNG is one of the last great frontiers left in the world. His description was spot on. Doug and his wife had booked onto a 'twitchers' holiday, going off into the jungle at some silly o'clock in search of rare birds and creepy crawlies. Part of my evening entertainment included Doug's daily picture recital and I must admit he had captured some impressive close-ups of owls, parrots, butterflies, beetles, praying mantes and other strange looking subjects.

But my own thoughts were firmly focused on the South Pacific



If wrecks are your thing, PNG has several

Ocean. I had bought an Asian Diver scuba guide on PNG around 20 years ago in the hope that I would get the chance to visit. The diversity of coral and fish species had blown me away. Now the glossy pages were a reality. I was exploring the dive sites up close and personal.

Dive Worldwide and the Papua New Guinea Tourist Board had organised a 22 day super trip involving 12 flights, four resorts, numerous boat and bus transfers and as much diving as I could physically handle. There was even some spare time for land tours. On an abandoned WWII air strip I found the remains of two bombers, a Mitchell B-25 and a Lockheed Vega Ventura which were still in surprisingly good condition.

Hotel Manager, Etty, was waiting for me when I eventually rolled up at Walindi Plantation Resort. I had booked six nights and five days of diving (15 dives) on phase one of my schedule. I managed to speak with Walindi's GM Cheyne Benjamin, who was also an underwater photo-



Papua New Guinea's reefs are topographically varied

grapher, about the family-owned resort. What started as a two-room house on an abandoned cocoa plantation now offered 20 rooms (35 guests) on a full board basis. The kitchen, run by three local chefs, produced a 'tukka' buffet every day - but watch out for the local Marmite!

My thatched bungalow with en-suite fitted in well with the jungle surroundings. Some had even been designed with underwater photographers in mind. I had plenty of bench space for equipment preparation/maintenance and an overnight charging socket for batteries (the generators are turned off late evening and the resort runs on battery power). Diving kit is collected before breakfast and taken down to the boat ready for an 8:15am departure.

The dive centre is run by Canadian Gary Kulisek, who turned out to be a larger-than-life character with a heart of gold. A flooded camera strobe added to my list of 'unfortunate incidents' but with Gary's help I managed to get it firing again. Gary's son, Olympic snowboarder Matts, agreed to model for my pictures so after the initial setback I was ready for action. Kimbe Bay offers around 25 named dive sites but the guides are always finding new spots. Josie's turned out to be a reef/wall dive with the most amazing range of pristine hard corals I have ever seen. Most of the Aussie divers I bumped into admitted that PNG has far better hard corals than the Great Barrier Reef. Walindi Resort also offers liveaboard trips on the 23-metre-long MV Febrina. I didn't have any spare time for a test drive (and the boat was fully booked), but I did get a quick tour. The facilities looked basic but clean, tidy and functional.

As the dive boat headed out to Bradford's I noticed the dense jungle along the shoreline was broken up by a number of towering volcanoes. The offshore dive sites showed some similarities with giant seamounts rising to within 10-15m of the surface and then dropping dramatically into the deep blue. This type of topography gives divers the best of both worlds. Close pelagic encounters with tuna, dolphin, hammerhead sharks and orcas are quite common - the week before my arrival an orca was seen eating a hammerhead. Vertiginous walls swathed in vibrant corals and inhabited by a huge diversity of reef fish, predatory sharks and shoals of circling barracuda - as well as the smaller critters including pygmy seahorses - are also commonplace. I even found a number of caverns and swim throughs to explore.

The dive centre operates three 10-metre-long dive boats fitted with outboard motors. On a 'busy' day I had three divers (plus guide and

Dive Papua with Stuart!

Dive Worldwide is offering you the chance to visit PNG with Stuart Philpott. The 16-day trip commences 2 September, 2016 and costs £4,495pp. Package includes flights, full board accommodation at the Walindi Plantation Resort and Lissenung Island Resort, diving and transfers.



skipper) on my boat. Normally the dive guide will pick one of the off-shore seamounts as a first dive and then come back along the coast for dive two. The visibility offshore easily reaches 30 metres. Closer inshore, depending on the season, this can vary from 10 to 20 metres.

The WWII Japanese Zero fighter was by far my best second dive. The plane, discovered in 2000, was in exceptional condition considering its age. Apart from some slight tail damage it was lying upright totally intact, including machine guns, cockpit gauges and joystick. Gary told me that the plane had most probably been ditched by the pilot when he ran out of fuel. The pilot survived the crash landing but was never seen again. A Japanese diving instructor jotted down some serial numbers and traced the plane and pilot back to his family. In 2013 his descendants visited the dive site to lay flowers and say prayers. The Zero was lying on a fairly silty seabed at a depth of 18m. Conditions on

the day were quite murky and green. There were two anemones - one growing at the rear of the cockpit and the other on the wing - which made great subjects for photographs. I spent a good 30 minutes on the wreck taking pictures from all angles.

My bad karma wasn't getting any better though. I had somehow picked up a cold and instead of staying out of the water to recover I carried on diving. While trying to equalise I burst my eardrum. Against all recommendations I soldiered on.

Otto's reef was a popular site for third dives. Gary said there was an old fishing trawler in the harbour lying upright at a maximum depth of 36m. It wasn't a WWII wreck but nevertheless it was still a proper shipwreck. I spent two whole dives exploring the decks inside and out.

My tribal gremlins were still causing havoc. On the 90-minute flight back to Port Moresby the pilot had to make an emergency landing! I don't think I'll be able to eat bacon again the way my luck was going!

I got picked up at the airport and within 30 minutes was on Loloata Island, wheeling my luggage along the jetty, dodging wallabies on the way. Phase two of my schedule only allowed for three nights and five dives. Loloata Island opened in 1978. Altogether there are 23 rooms, some with air-con. I didn't think the accommodation had the same rustic appeal as Walindi Plantation Resort but the rooms with en-suite were spacious and had an uninterrupted 180 degree sea view.

At breakfast there were only two other guests: Dr Lee from Vietnam and a strange German man. Dr Lee had a fascination with Rhinopias. I had no idea what he was talking about but I did a quick search on the internet and found that Rhinopias aphanes is a type of rare scorpionfish found in PNG. I spent three dives searching for Rhinopias. There were some nice looking sea fans, a cuttlefish, a huge variety of anemone fish, starfish, damsels and the odd shark or two but absolutely no Rhinopias!

I had made a pact with Dr Lee. Three dives looking for Rhinopias meant I could explore two wrecks the following morning. Our first dive on the 65-metre-long freighter Pacific Gas made a welcome change from macro subjects. The wreck, sunk in 1986, sits upright at a maximum depth of 44m. The telegraph is still inside the bridge. The decks were loaded with sea fans, colourful soft corals and brittle black corals.

The second wreck dive was another WWII plane, but this time an American twin-engine A20 Havoc discovered in 1981. The plane was hit during an attack on Japanese forces at Guadalgal and crash-landed while returning to Jackson's airstrip. The aircrew survived the impact.

There was just enough time to pack my bags before heading off to the airport again. Next stop would be Lissenung Island Resort at Kavieng on New Ireland - yet another plane, bus and boat ride away. The sun had come out. Maybe my luck was about to change. ■

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW PAPUA NEW GUINEA



WHERE IS IT?

Papua New Guinea lies to the east of Indonesia (the western half of the island is Indonesia's Papua) and north of Australia.

HOW TO GET THERE

All flights include at least one stopover in Asia (often Singapore) before a second leg into Port Moresby.

WHEN TO VISIT

You can dive Papua New Guinea all year round

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A passport with six months until expiry. Visa issued on arrival for a maximum stay of 60 days. Visas can only be issued on arrival at the international airports in Port Mo-

resby and Rabaul. Passengers must hold return or onward tickets to qualify for visas. It is recommended holidaymakers obtain a visa prior to arrival.

CURRENCY

Papua New Guinea Kina (£1 = 4.12PGK)

WHERE TO EAT AND MEET

Walindi Plantation Resort and Loloata Island are perfect places to unwind with your fellow divers - and the buffet at the former is excellent. Just watch out for that Marmite!

VERDICT

Papua New Guinea offers a diving experience like no other. It is off the beaten track and pristine.

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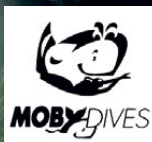
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Terribly quarry, I was wrong!

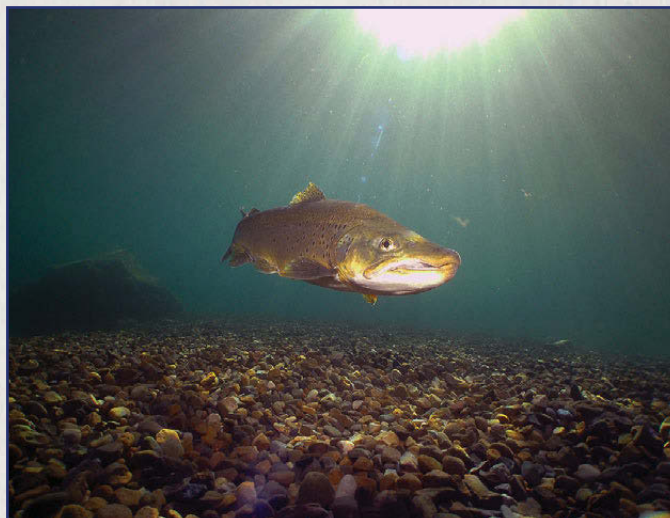
Hi guys!

So, my mother always told me it's a healthy thing to admit when you're wrong. And here it is: I was wrong.

Over the years I have scoffed at pals who've headed to inland sites when the weather rolls in and scratches coastal plans. I just never saw the point - no proper marine life, no beautiful topside views... nothing. Inland sites tend to be quarries filled with a selection of ford escorts, concrete blocks and maybe an aircraft or two... but even those aren't REAL wrecks. Anyway, quarries were off my radar.

Then I didn't go diving for a year or so. The time out meant I was a little apprehensive on my first weekend back. The weather was terrible and my friend suggested Capernwray, our nearest inland site. I was so desperate to get wet I said 'yes'. And you know what, I had a cracking time! Superb vis, fish life and excellent hot chocolate. Converted.

Ash Olney, via email



Thanks for the tip

Hello Sport Diver. I was out in Raja Ampat recently and met Deputy Editor Will - he was part of the group of divers on our boat Shakti. I am emailing in to say thanks for the recommendation for my new wing. I have been diving regular BCDs for years and was in need of a new one (I dive a lot in sunny places and the UV destroys the material). Will was diving in the Apeks WTX-D18 wing and I loved how minimal it looked - no pockets or things hanging everywhere. He said it held him nice in the water, really comfortable and also great for travel due to its size. Most importantly for me though was how sturdy the material felt - it seemed like it would last a long time, even in sunshine. As soon as I got home to the Netherlands, I went online and bought one. I have been diving plenty since - Egypt, Barbados and Belize - and I have really enjoyed using it.

I would like to say thank you for the recommendation and letting me have a play with the wing on the boat. I also checked out a couple of other suggestions, but I was always keen for the WTX.

Thanks also for sharing your photos - my young grandchildren have enjoyed seeing what I do on my holidays!

Also, I have now subscribed to the magazine and really enjoy it. Thank you for that suggestion also! Wink, wink. I don't blame you for plugging it!

Thanks and happy diving!

Robert, via email

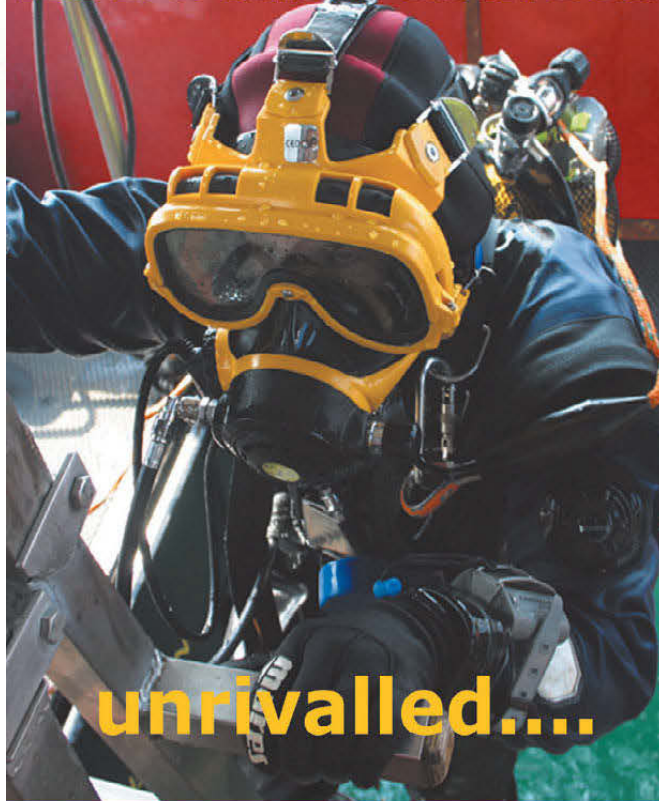
Too old? Never!

I have just got back from a liveaboard trip in the Red Sea. I loved every second of it, as I have done on each occasion I have visited in the previous 20 years or so. It is a special place and one I will keep returning to again and again for as long as I can.

With each passing year though, I do notice more people tend to look at me a little more disconcertingly. I'm in my 70s but pretty fit for it. In fact, I'd say I'm a lot healthier than many chaps in their 50s. But the shock of white hair and the slim physique get people all worried when I'm kitting-up etc. I don't have a problem with it really, but a word to the wise: us elderly folk wouldn't still be diving if we couldn't hack it. I think I can speak for the rest of my lot when I say that if I wasn't able to sort myself out I wouldn't board the boat in the first place.

Arnie Watts, via email

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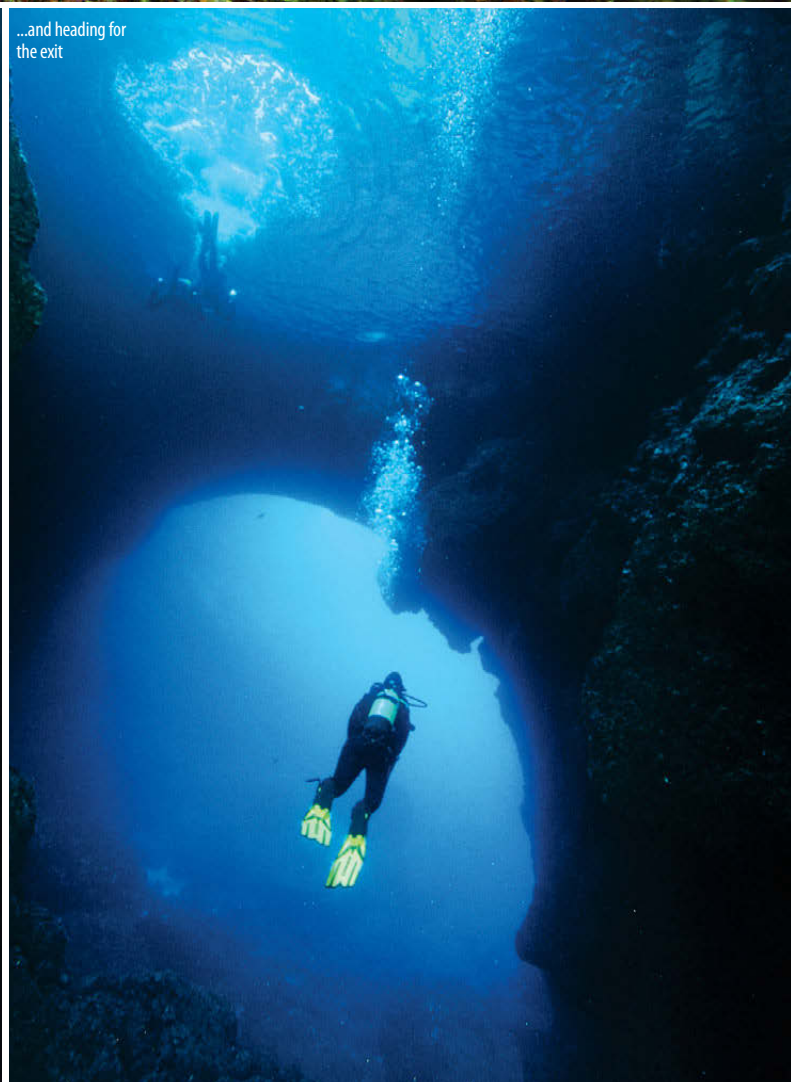
Vibrant corals and sponges adorn the Ibiza reefs



Inside one of the caverns...



...and heading for the exit



THE SECRET GARDENS OF

Ibiza

Ibiza may be better known for nightclubs and dubious reality TV shows, but as [GAVIN ANDERSON](#) discovered, it offers fabulous wreck, reef and cave dives for all levels

Photographs by GAVIN ANDERSON

We were diving in the middle of the most-amazing gorgonian forest. Painted pinky-purple, they grew out from a sheer wall encrusted with yellow and orange flowering corals and sponges, and home to bright red starfish and the odd tiny nudibranch. The wall plunged away well beyond 50m, where a mystical sand channel wound its way back and forth as far as the eye could see. Up above us the forest led up to what looked like a magnificent mountain where, right at the edge of our visibility, I could just make out the last couple of divers in our group descending. They looked like tiny submarine mountaineers, freefalling down the stunning seascape. The view was spectacular - you could be forgiven for thinking we were on a coral reef in the Pacific, but we were actually diving off the Spanish island of Ibiza, located in the Mediterranean Sea, just a short flight from the UK.

"I never knew there was good diving in Ibiza," I hear you say. "It's better known for wild all-night drinking raves and badly behaving teenagers on late-night reality TV shows." Well, that's exactly what I thought when I was invited on a press trip here in the middle of winter. I had joined a group of journalists from Holland, Spain and Sweden to experience what's known as an 'Ibiza diving tour'.

The idea was to dive on all four sides of the island with four different dive centres on four different days, with a day spare in case of exceptional weather. The philosophy of the Ibiza diving tour is that you will always be able to find a dive somewhere around the island at one of the four participating dive centres. This philosophy had already been severely put to the test on day one of our tour as we were buffeted by gale force winds, driving rain and bursts of lightning.

The sea was as wild as the weather and it looked like there would be no chance of a dive. Day one's planned itinerary had been with the Seahorse Dive Centre in the north of the island, where the storm had been at its worst. However, we had made a 25-minute drive south to Amphibios, located close to Ibiza Town. Here, amazingly, we found a protected dive site just a five-minute RIB ride out from the beach to two tiny islands called Los Dados and Dado Pequeno. We had dived on the latter, expecting low vis and perhaps an uninspiring dive.

MORE TO SEE. MORE TO DO. MORE TO REMEMBER!

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We were greeted with large shoals of two-banded bream, picarel, damselfish and gold-striped sea bream, as well as some enormous scorpionfish and octopus - and all in 12-metre visibility. It was an amazing dive and a great start to our trip.

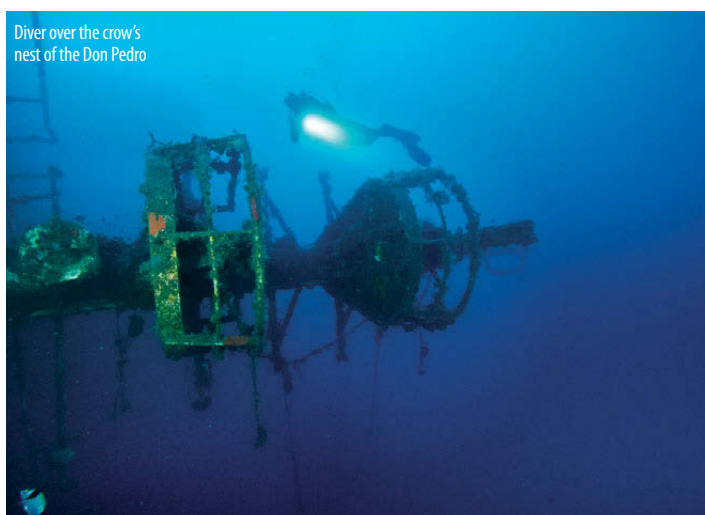
On day two, although the seas were still rough, we managed dives out from the north side of the island in the colourful Angel Orcasub's RIB. Angel found us protected sites at Aquia and La Bota Des Vedra pinnacles that rose from 40m and 50m respectively to just 3m and a few inches below the surface. Aquia was my favourite, complete with overhangs and small caves covered in orange flowering corals. It was also a great place for nudibranchs, and we were also joined by schools of barracuda and a couple of amberjack.

By day three, the sea in the north was flat calm and we were able to get out quite a way offshore. We were diving off the Seahorse Dive Centre's speedboat and its British owner Jeff had taken us to one of his favourite spots a short distance from the islands of S'Espartar and Sa Conillera. Here, at the gorgonian forest mentioned before, we had jumped off the back of the boat surrounded by fantastic scenery, which continued underwater. We enjoyed one of the island's most-colourful dive sites in amazing visibility.

In among the gorgonians, damselfish and rainbow wrasse busily swam to and fro picking off small morsels in the water while an interested moray eel watched them closely ready to pounce at any moment. I reached 45m before deciding to slowly head back up the wall. On my way down I'd stopped off at a couple of huge rocks to take some photographs before surveying the amazing vistas. I was reflecting on what a brilliant spot this was when some of the group spotted a John Dory - just one of the many species of marine life encountered around



Loading the RIB for a day on the water



Diver over the crow's nest of the Don Pedro



The Don Pedro is a monstrous wreck

"Here, early in the morning on 11 July 2007, a huge roll-on, roll-off container ship called the Don Pedro hit rocks and sank in 45m"

this island that can also be found in the UK.

Ibiza is still a secret in diving circles. Many of the divers who visit the island are inexperienced, many doing their first dives on the island while on courses. Although the gorgonian forest is just a bit deep for them, there are many top sites within beginner range.

Our next dive site was one such place. It was several kilometres back northwest to a spot beyond Cape Negret, where we found two small islands, Ses Margalides. The larger island was very scenic, shaped like a horseshoe and complete with a natural arch which boats are able to cruise right underneath. Jeff anchored the boat in a sheltered spot on the other side. After he gave us the briefing and everyone kitted-up, he led us back under the arch, this time underwater.

With our left shoulders closest to the wall, we came out and round the corner to some fantastic underwater arches covered in orange and yellow anemones, corals, sponges and sea squirts. From the arches we followed Jeff to an opening at 18m which led to a cave riddled with passageways. Light filtered in from above and the sides, allowing easy navigation and safe entry and exit. The caves were very atmospheric, and later Jeff told us they are even better in summer - we were in mid-winter, only a few days from the shortest day.

At the end of each day's dives, we enjoyed some great food and Spanish hospitality at a local restaurant. There, along with a film crew from the local TV station, who had been following us both topside and underwater, we got to learn more about the island and the Ibiza diving tour. The idea of inviting us out here in winter was to show us what's possible in the off-season. The local council who had sponsored our trip were keen to encourage out-of-season tourism and I could see a few benefits of coming here in winter. It's very affordable, you'll have the pick of the dive sites all to yourselves, and Ibiza is also a much nicer

"I came to Ibiza with fairly low expectations, but I'd been blown away by the variety of dive sites and marine life"



place in winter. All the chain restaurants close down along with most of the main hotel groups - we stayed in the small, friendly and affordable Hotel Marino (www.hostalmarino.es). The island reverts to how it was 40 years ago and it's just the locals and a few ex-pats who are left. I had been fearing a little jumping around from one dive centre to the next, but everything had been very well organised and on day four we drove back to Amphibios. On day one we'd only managed one dive here and the lovely couple, Dutch girl Nicky and local man Jaume, wanted to show us more.

They took us back to the island Dada Pequeno. Here, early in the morning on 11 July 2007, a huge roll-on, roll-off container ship called the Don Pedro hit rocks and sank in 45m. She was on her way from Ibiza Town harbour to Barcelona. It's not clear how, but it's thought the captain simply steered the wrong side of the cardinal mark! The ship is huge - 142 metres long, 20 metres wide and the dive starts in 20m. It's normal to explore her stern, the most-interesting part, first. Very little of the ship has been salvaged, and her massive prop is impressive, as is the huge now-sealed back door. She had been carrying many containers on trailers, mostly empty but some filled with used batteries, which were salvaged in a massive clean-up operation. Moving around the back door, we just had enough time to explore her

Contact information

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 Subfari Portinatx, T: +34 971 33 75 58, E: info@subfari.es

bridge and crow's nest, the most-scenic part of the wreck. Here on various ladders huge scorpionfish perched ready to ambush anything that came too close. Barracuda circled above us and as we began our ascent up the anchor line we were joined by a group of large amberjack. It was another brilliant dive.

Our next dive was further out to sea on an old fish farm known now as the Mariana Platform. Here, not far from the Espardell Strait that divides the main island from the island of Formentera, we encountered yet more enormous scorpionfish, schooling barracuda and two-banded and gold-striped bream among the support pillars. The fish farm was used to fatten gilt-head bream until its supporting platform keeled over to one side and was then abandoned. It's a great multi-level dive as the pillars and superstructure range from 11-32m and many areas are totally encrusted with life ranging from colourful sponges and orange sunset coral to tube worms and sea squirts.

Day five - our reserve day - took us to the far north of the island to dive off the high and impressive sea cliffs at Cape Albaraca, around a 40-minute RIB ride from the Subfari Dive Centre, located on Puerto's beach Portinatx. Here Israel and Vicente, who run Subfari, took us to a place where we could dive two great sites in one dive, the Pillars of Hercules and the Cave of Light.

The entrance to the first of the two caves was in just 12m. Here, inside a vast space where years of erosion have created fantastic pillars and spaces, shafts of shimmering light create an amazing scene. The views everywhere were impressive and even close up I found the walls were encrusted with yellow and orange anemones, coral and sponges. After 15 or so minutes enjoying the views, we headed north along the wall to the Cave of Light. As we reached the next cave we were in for a treat. The entrance was impressive and inside the space was vast. The cave was much deeper and longer than the first. Looking up through a small hole in the ceiling, a fantastic shaft of light slowly filtered down towards us. Following our guide we found ourselves surfacing into a fairly large cavern where we could remove our masks and regs and have a chat. This was to be our last dive of our tour.

I came to Ibiza with fairly low expectations, but I'd been blown away by the variety of dive sites and marine life. We had sampled some of the best sites Ibiza has to offer, but there are many more left for a return trip and I am sure I will be back. ■

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IBIZA, BALEARIC ISLANDS



HOW TO GET THERE

Fly to Ibiza via London City in winter with British Airways, and many other airports and airlines in summer. Prices start from around £120 return.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

You can head out to Ibiza at any time, as Gavin's trip showed, though the warmer - and busier - time is obviously summer.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Six months left to expiry on your passport.

CURRENCY

Euro (£1 = 1.34 euro).

WHERE TO EAT AND MEET

There are a multitude of bars and restaurants in which to quench your post-dive thirst and hunger, from all the chains to local hangouts.

VERDICT

Ibiza proved a surprise package for Gavin, astounding him with the sheer amount of marine life and growth - and this was in the off-season! Throw in the Don Pedro - one of the largest wrecks in the Med - and this Balearic Island deserves a second look.



*Sant Josep
de sa Talaia
... love you
Ibiza*

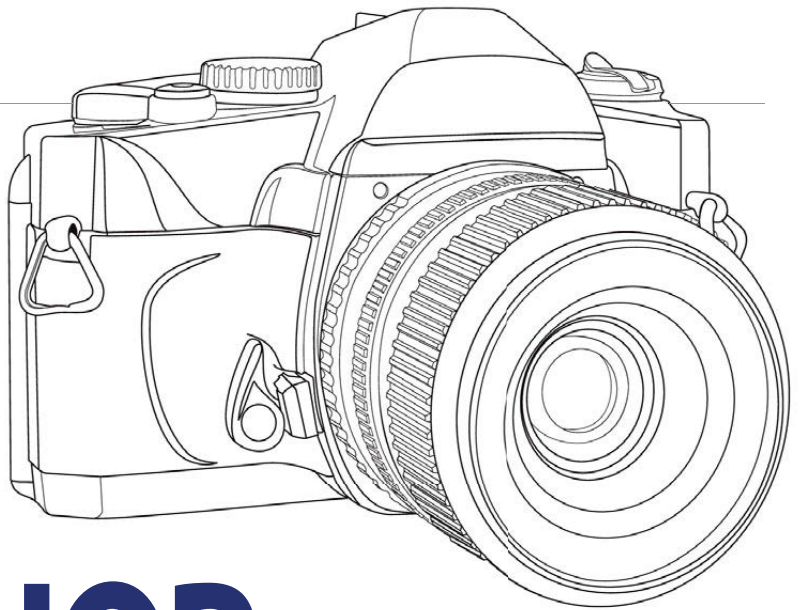


santjosep!tv

HOW THAT SHOT WAS TAKEN

Expert advice from respected
underwater photographer
Martin Edge

PHOTO WORKSHOP



ADVANCED COMPOSITION: PRECISE VIEWING

Continuing his Advanced Composition theme, Martin this month looks at the subject of precise viewing

Photographs by MARTIN EDGE

The Advanced Composition theme continues this month with a slight change of subject placement, which can make all the difference. The motivation for this compositional series came as a result of recently judging UK's 'Underwater Photographer of the Year' competition and Underwater Photo Guide's 'Ocean Art Competition'. If I think back to my decision-making, particularly in the initial rounds of viewing, what made a difference from my point of view was the choice and quality of the composition.

This month I'm using one of my own composition blunders together with the corrected example to make my point. I concede that it's only a minor alteration but nevertheless it makes a significant improvement in my opinion. Before you read on take a look at both image examples. Both were taken within minutes of each other. I was diving a pier in Ambon, Indonesia known as The Twilight Zone, close to Maluku Diver Resort. The subjects were a swarming school of striped eel catfish. I was shooting with a Nikon 60mm macro lens at f 16, 1/320th shutter and ISO200 with two Inon 220 flashguns. I've photographed these catfish many times over the years but I was drawn to this particular school because they were so tightly packed together, travelling along the sandy bottom directly towards me. Great potential! I settled down on the



Figure 1
Fig 1 depicts my first position. I'm too low and as a result all I've achieved is the bright distracting underbelly with little eye contact.



Figure 2

Fig 2 depicts my second attempt, taken about two minutes later after having reviewed the LCD screen on the back of my camera. I've lifted my body position to eliminate their white belly and as a result captured more eye contact.

bottom, lay still, aimed my camera and took a quick 'test shot'. All good! Exposure and lighting were sound. I took at least ten frames in a vertical orientation. The school passed each side of me and onwards which provided a window of opportunity to check lighting and composition on the back of my LCD screen. Scrolling through the back screen, I immediately noticed that both my vertical format choice and angle of view was totally flawed. All I could see of the catfish was their white

underbelly with little eye contact at all. It was totally the wrong angle. I had made the mistake of getting comfortable on the sand and choosing a body position which was easy for me to adopt but unproductive for anything else.

Change of plan! I took off, swam in a circle and once again settled down on the sand for a second chance. This time I reverted to a horizontal format and lifted my upper body off the sand to shoot them more at eye level, which

had the immediate effect of reducing the view of their white underbelly and improving their eye contact with the viewer.

EQUIPMENT AND SETTINGS

Nikon D7000 with 60mm macro lens. Aperture f16 at 1/320th shutter speed. ISO 200. Flash-guns were two Inon 220's placed each side of my port level where my macro port fits onto the housing. Both images taken with the same camera settings. ■

PROFILE

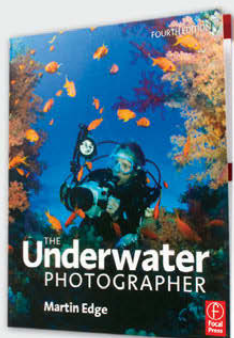
Martin Edge was born in Staffordshire, England in 1955, where he grew up without any inclination towards diving or photography. Years later, he moved to the Dorset coastline and in 1977 it was here that he learnt to dive. He had never had any particular interest or tuition in photography, but his desire to shoot pictures underwater grew into a passion bordering on an obsession. Over the last 20 years he has introduced, developed, motivated and mentored hundreds of underwater photographers.



SIGNED BY THE AUTHOR!

The fourth edition of Martin's book, *The Underwater Photographer*, is now available.

For a signed copy, phone 01202 887611 or email martin@edgeunderwaterphotography.com



NEED GIFT IDEAS?

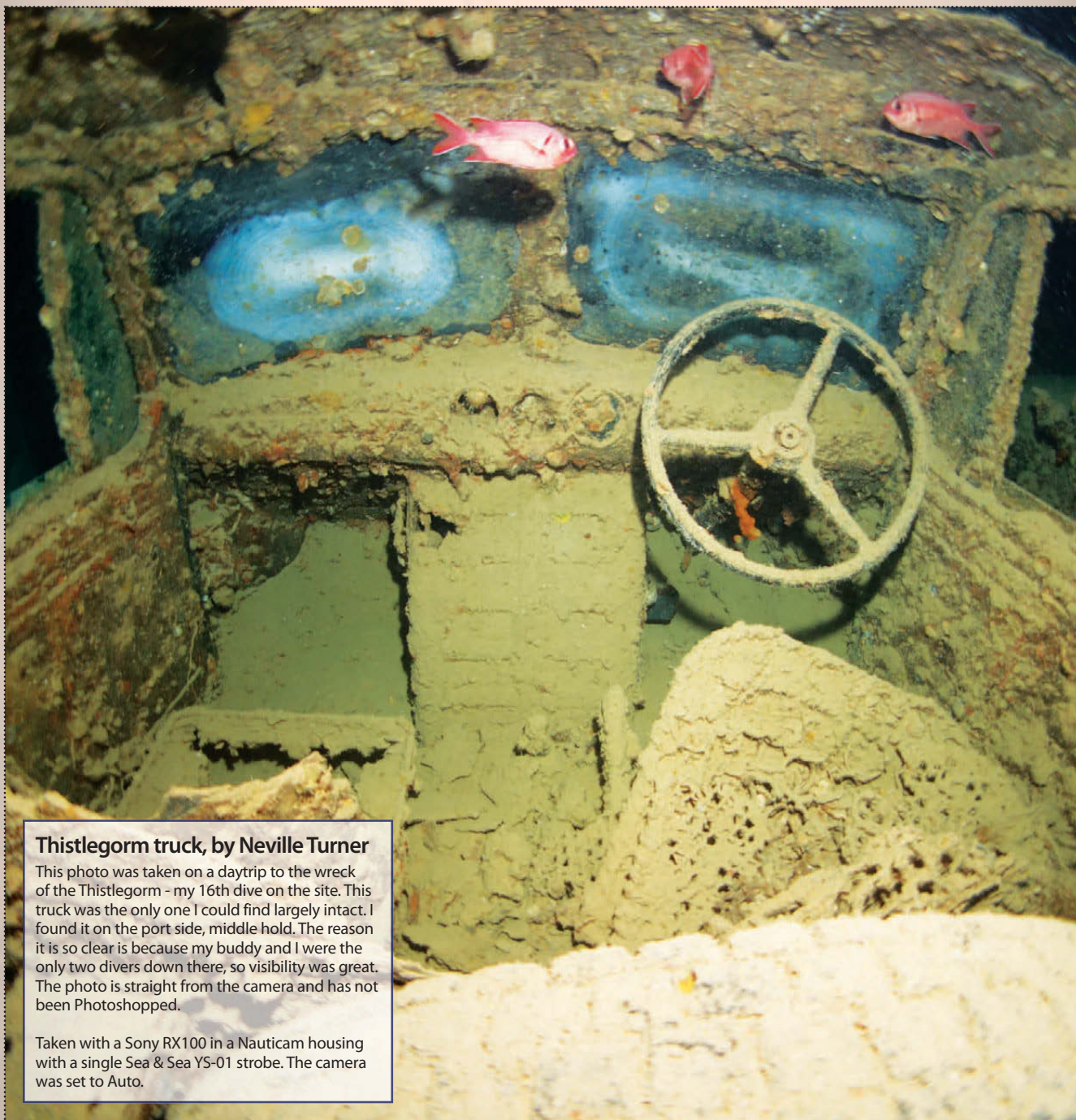
Treat someone to a Photo Course with Martin. Martin runs one-day photo tuition courses designed for one, two or three persons. He promises to improve your photo skills by at least five years. Group bookings at discounted rates are available. Go to www.edgeunderwaterphotography.com for details or email Martin direct on martin@edgeunderwaterphotography.com

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Thistlegorm truck, by Neville Turner

This photo was taken on a daytrip to the wreck of the Thistlegorm - my 16th dive on the site. This truck was the only one I could find largely intact. I found it on the port side, middle hold. The reason it is so clear is because my buddy and I were the only two divers down there, so visibility was great. The photo is straight from the camera and has not been Photoshopped.

Taken with a Sony RX100 in a Nauticam housing with a single Sea & Sea YS-01 strobe. The camera was set to Auto.

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The wreck is covered in
a fine layer of silt and
marine growth



THE IN-BETWEENER



Inspired by the 100th anniversary of World War One, **STUART PHILPOTT** heads to Cornwall to dive the wreck of the Anna Sofie, a downed cargo ship shrouded in mystery

Photographs by STUART PHILPOTT

Last year marked the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War One. As part of the commemorations, artists Paul Cummins and Tom Piper touched our hearts with their installation of 888,246 ceramic poppies at the Tower of London. This was a fitting tribute to all those that fought and died during the war. When I spoke to Hutch, the owner of Harlyn Dive School in Rock, Cornwall, he mentioned an intriguing story about a World War One wreck called the Anna Sofie that had hit local news headlines around the same time as the poppies. Covering a topical story as well as exploring a historical shipwreck was an exciting prospect and, to be honest, Rock is a rather nice part of the country, so I was looking forward to a return visit.

I spoke with John Buckingham from the Padstow Museum. He said: "There were two casualties when the Anna Sofie went down - Private William Moore and an unknown marine." For the past 99 years, the gravestone has been inscribed with 'a Royal Marine of the Great War', but John's research has finally uncovered the true identity of the dead soldier.

On 23 July, 1918, the 97.5-metre-long, 2,577-ton armed merchantman Anna Sofie was in ballast (not carrying any cargo) and returning to Wales when, without warning, she was torpedoed by U-boat U55, commanded by the infamous Kapitänleutnant Wilhelm Werner. The crew of around 70, including mortally wounded marine gunner Private William Moore, managed to escape in lifeboats and were rescued at sea. More than two weeks later the body of another marine gunner washed up on the shore at Padstow. The badly decomposed body couldn't be identified and was buried next to Private Moore's grave without a name on the headstone. John delved through the historical archives and discovered that the 'unknown' marine was Lance Corporal William Whitmore. At least the descendants of his family could now pay their respects.

"Approximately 40 minutes later we were back on the surface, our faces beaming. There had been plenty of interesting bits and pieces to keep my camera occupied"

Parts of the wreck are well broken up



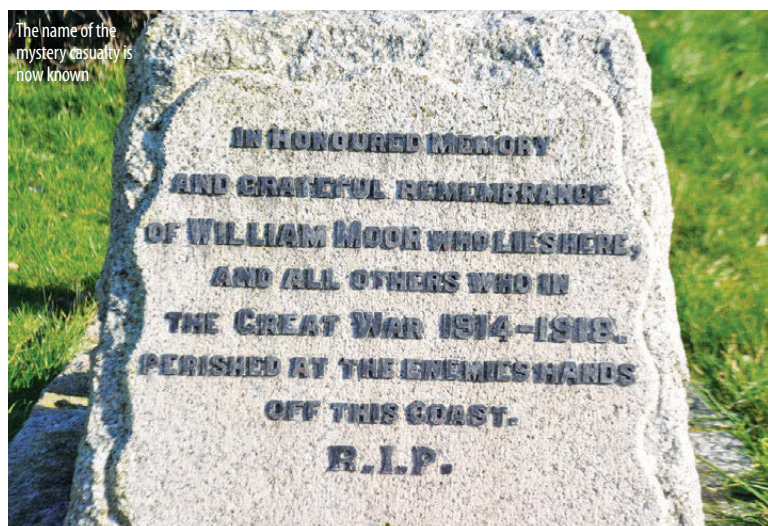
As for Werner's U-boat, from July 1916 to November 1918, the U55 completed 14 successful patrols, sinking a total of 64 mostly unarmed ships. During the Leipzig war crimes trials at the end of World War One, he was accused of murdering the entire crew of SS Torrington, except for the Captain, who was taken hostage. Werner lined up the captured crew of 32 on the U-boat's foredeck and then gave the order to submerge, which undoubtedly drowned them all. But he fled Germany before the trial concluded and ended up working on a coffee plantation in Brazil.

Up until a few years ago, the name of the shipwreck was also something of a mystery. Hutch thought she was the Anna Sofie, but there had been conflicting reports that the wreck might be the cargo steamer SS Poldown. Hutch carried on searching for evidence and in April 2011 found serial number 1275MC stamped on a steam valve, confirming that she was indeed the Anna Sofie.

Even though the Anna Sofie is steeped in history, she is not a popular choice with divers. Hutch said: "The wreck is seen as an 'in-between' wreck. It's a bit deep for most divers - Scooby Doo'ers prefer 30m or less - and it's too shallow for most techies." Hutch has clocked up more than 100 dives on the wreck since the early 1990s. Finds have included a substantial number of brass shell cases, portholes and engine components. The aft gun manned by marine gunner Lance Corporal William Whitmore has not yet been found. In the past 12 months, Hutch has only visited the wreck once, citing the fact there are "just too many good wrecks to choose from".

The wreck is located in the middle of Padstow's marine conservation zone. Hutch said: "It sits right next to a reef wall so it's difficult for

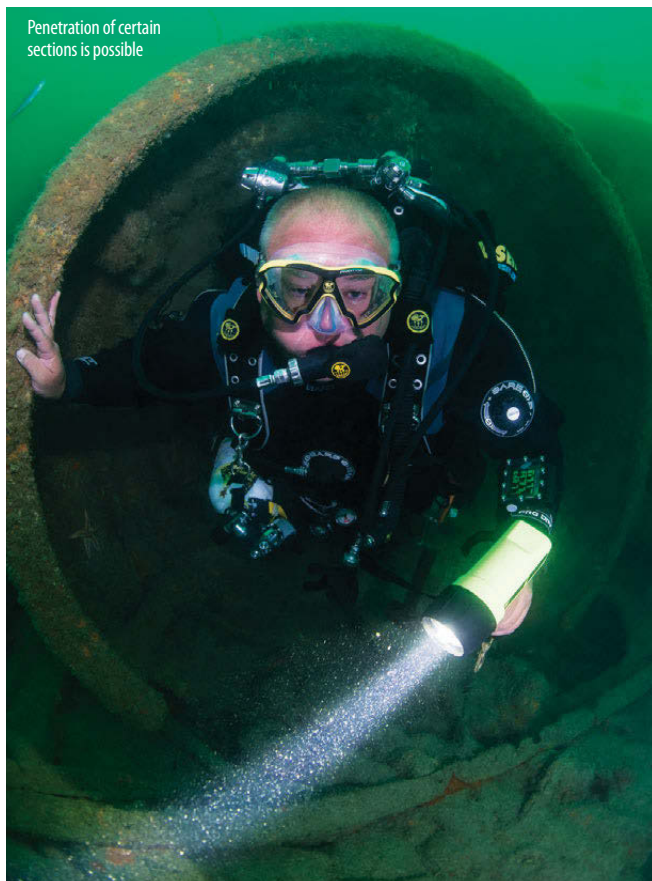
The name of the mystery casualty is now known



boats to find. If they do find it, a lot of divers don't go to the end of the shotline and drop down onto the reef instead."

We made plans to do two dives on the Anna Sofie in the same day, which meant catching both slack tides. This was a slightly unconventional way of doing things as there would be an approximate six-hour wait in between dives, but two dives would give me a much-better opportunity to explore and photograph the wreck. Harlyn Dive School's eight-metre RIB (with a single 250hp outboard) covered the eight-and-a-half-mile journey from Rock to the wreck in 20 minutes flat. I was kitted up and rolling back into the sea by 10.45am.

Penetration of certain sections is possible



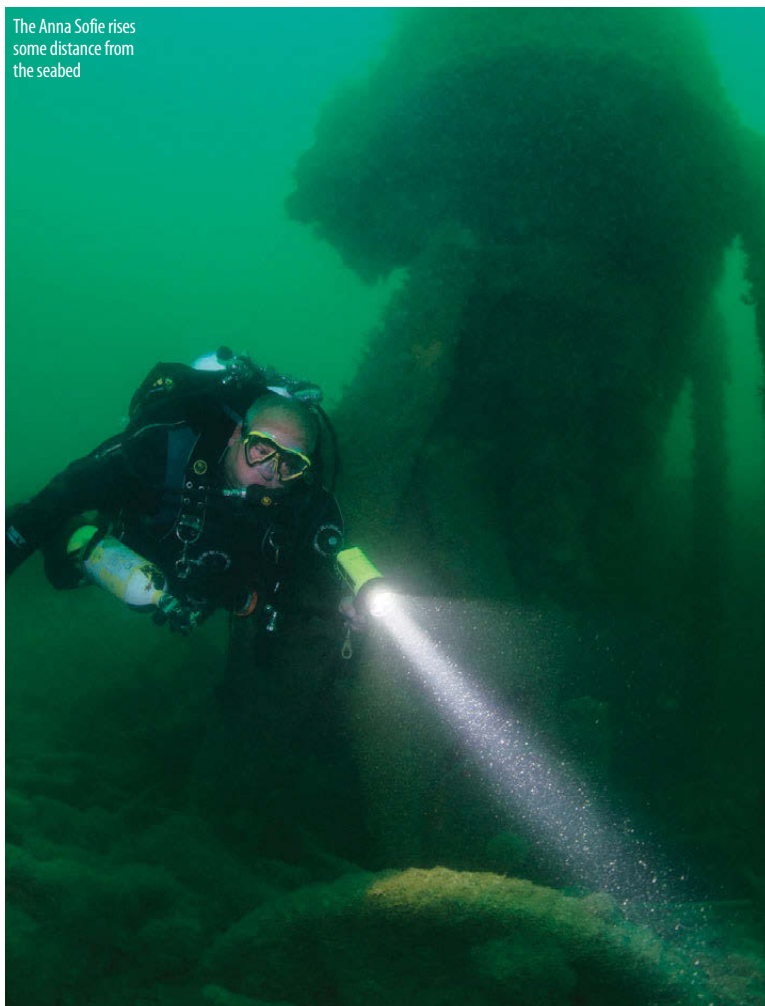
My first dive with Andrew St John Ricks was at high water, a maximum depth of 43m. We had agreed to start amidships and then move forward towards the bow. I was disappointed with the visibility, which maxed out at four or five metres. High tide is usually better than low water so this didn't bode well for the second dive. Andrew wasn't wearing a hood so with a few tweaks using editing software, I could still make the location look sub-tropical!

Hutch had dropped the shotline roughly amidships on the port side. I followed Andrew down to the reef wall and caught sight of an elongated bomb-shaped object that turned out to be a heating element of some kind. We passed by two large boilers, paused at a prop for a picture or two (this must have been in the cargo hold), and then headed for the bow. My camera lights illuminated a huge rusty metal plate loaded with colourful starfish. Lobster and conger eels were peering from the darker recesses. There definitely wasn't any shortage of marine life. We investigated some winches, a bollard with a spider crab on top and a length of anchor chain. The pointed bow shape had totally collapsed, as had much of the surrounding superstructure. We ended up back at the boilers, now the highest point of the wreck standing five metres proud of the seabed. Approximately 40 minutes later we were back on the surface, our faces beaming. There had been plenty of interesting bits and pieces to keep my camera occupied. The only downside was the time restraint.

The pace ramped up considerably on my second dive at low water, a maximum depth of 38m, Hutch as the guide. For some strange reason the underwater visibility was much better, but ambient light was less owing to the fact it was 5pm (so I increased my camera ISO from 800

"The badly decomposed body couldn't be identified and was buried next to Private Moore's grave without a name on the headstone"

The Anna Sofie rises some distance from the seabed



to 1200). I wanted to go back over some of the areas I had visited with Andrew before heading to the stern, rudder and the propeller. But trying to do the whole length of the wreck and compose pictures with less than 20 minutes on the clock was a big ask.

Hutch had told me about the 'impressive engine' before we got in the water. The triple expansion engine manufactured by Blair and Co towered above us. I managed to compose a nice atmospheric silhouette of the engine with Hutch in the foreground. We passed close to the reef wall on our journey back to the shotline. Hutch pointed to a number of protruding antennae which turned out to be crawfish. They all looked to be a good edible size. This was the first time I had seen this species in UK waters. If we had had more time I would have stopped for some pictures but my deco time was already starting to mount up.

On both Anna Sofie dives I had opted for nitrox 28 instead of a weak trimix fill. The latter would have been a better option as I was taking far too long to work out my camera settings. I find trimix gives me a slightly better edge.

Both dives were completed on time and to schedule, and I really enjoyed spending the day with Harlyn Dive School. My pictures could have been better but what's new, I'm always complaining! Reading about the Anna Sofie's history (especially the parts about Lance Corporal William Whitmore and U55's commander, Wilhelm Werner) had given me a much clearer pre-dive perspective. It's a shame we didn't find the deck gun. I'll definitely be back with Hutch and Andrew later this year for some more wreck exploration. Next time I quite fancy diving on one of Hutch's local U-boat sites. It would be nice to touch some German metal for a change. ■

Diving the Stunning South West of England

The southwest is renowned for its beautiful beaches, craggy coves and perfect pasties. The diving is pretty fantastic too. Depending on the time of year, divers have the chance of seeing seals, blue sharks and basking sharks, among other things. With a range of quality dive centres and charter boats to choose from on both the north and south coastlines, visitors are spoiled for choice. And if the wind does start a-howling, well there's always the pub!



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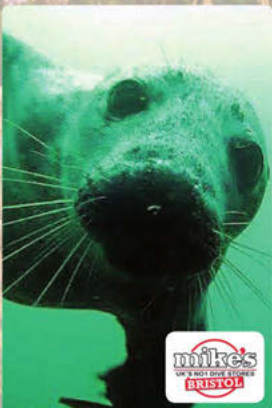
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Cornish Diving School

5

The water sports haven of Falmouth is also a haven for scuba divers. Protected in most weathers and with excellent access to some of the UK's best diving, top wrecks, amazing reefs, shore and boat diving, the town is becoming a Mecca for divers. The Cornish Diving School is one of the largest PADI 5 Star IDCs in the region and provide world class training, retail, air, nitrox, guided dives, shore dives and boat charter.

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"I became so passionate about saving sharks, that I started an organization called (Save Our Sharks Bermuda). I collected over 1000 signatures and made an impact."

A life under the sea with Kids Sea Camp fuels a passion for photography

Article by Zebedee Wakely, Junior Master Scuba Diver, Age 13 and FDA approved.

FDA: Family Dive Adventures
(not to be confused with the Food and Drug Administration)

I just don't know where to begin with this. Kids Sea Camp is just too big and too great to even attempt to write about. But here you are now, attempting to read my jumbled mess of ideas and thoughts, so I'll give it a go (no promises though.)

I should probably start with the exciting stuff, like where I backward roll into a school of 50 plus sharks in Yap (the country, not the small annoying noise made by dogs) or when I'm charging at top speed through the current of Ulong Channel in Palau, but instead I'll start at the beginning.

At the age of five I started Kids Sea Camping, my parents signed me up in the group known as "SASY". Little kids get to put on scuba gear, but substitute the BCD for a Life Jacket, so we float on the surface while breathing through a regulator. This gave me my first experience with Scuba Diving.

Since I was already a water baby by six months and swimming by one, I thought **Kids Sea Camp** was created just for me. Quickly making my way through the dive ranks, I again returned for Seal Team. This was a landmark in my interest for Scuba Diving.

Seal Team is a program for eight and nine year olds to learn to dive in a confined water environment. However with Kids Sea Camp Seal Team can dive in



the ocean. I just fell in love with diving.

On my tenth birthday, my mom and dad chose Yap & Palau for our family adventure, and that's where the real story begins. The experiences I had in Yap and Palau were likely some of the best I will ever have. Completing my PADI Jr.

Open Water certification with manta rays over head, was surly one of the greatest moments of my life.

The feeling I had when I was diving with 15-foot mantas and some 50 plus reef sharks daily, was phenomenal, too amazing to fully describe. Just the idea of going there and doing that again will forever, excite me.

The encouragement given to me by Kids Sea Camp was amazing. The families I



**FAMILY DIVE
ADVENTURES**



KID SEA
CAMP FACT:

14

Number of
weeks of Kids
Sea Camp
Zebedee
Wakely has
attended.



met became, and still are, some of my best friends and assets to my life. In Yap, Manta Ray Bay was where I properly learned photography. The support from all of my friends and family is the reason I have stuck with it (*unlike a lot of other things I've tried*). I loved every aspect of Yap, from the diving, staff and the local people.

I can safely say that experience has significantly contributed to who I am today

Getting back home to Bermuda, I was so passionate about saving sharks (with Palau being a shark sanctuary) that I set up a small organization called "Save our Sharks Bermuda". I collected over 1000 signatures and met with the Minister for the Environment to discuss and plan how best to protect our sharks. Bermuda then signed the "International Agreement on the Conservation of Pelagic Species". I was

so totally delighted about this, because I had made an impact on Bermuda and the conservation of the sea.

Having the privilege to be diving from a young age is exceptional. Through diving with Kids Sea Camp over the years, I have climbed the PADI ranks from SASY, Seal Team, Jr. Open Water, Advanced Open Water, Rescue and Master Scuba Diver with over one hundred dives and seven specialties.

This feels too good to describe. Having a place like Kids Sea Camp, to go through all the ranks, all the way to the top, is what I love the most. The experience has been fantastic. I couldn't have done what I have without it.

I have made lifelong friends and have been encouraged by Margo in a way I could never repay. So thank you, Margo.

Margo deserves a whole part of my

story for herself. She created the best organization that I have ever known. She has influenced me, trusted me and helped me in every aspect of life. She has guided me through diving one step at a time, and with each step

I am even more grateful for her and my family finding her. She is very focused on safety and an inspirational teacher who is helpful no matter what. She is the heart of Kids Sea Camp!

I just don't know how to end this. So thanks mom, dad and sister Holly too. Our family of divers just can't get enough. Next is Fiji Kids Sea Camp, to dive with The sharks of Beqa Lagoon.

See more of Zebedee's images at: <http://instagram.com/zebwakely>.

For more info on Kids Sea Camp weeks:
www.familydivers.com, or email: dive@familydivers.com, or call: (803)419-2556





Scholarship Diary

The Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society is a non-profit, educational organisation whose mission is to promote educational activities associated with the underwater world. It has offered scholarships for more than 35 years. owuscholarship.org

FIJI TIME WITH BULL SHARKS

Elena enjoys the delights of fabulous Fiji

TEXT BY ELENA SALIM HAUBOLD

The best thing about the Rolex Scholarship is that it gave me the opportunity to visit many destinations that I had always dreamed about. Fiji was one of those places for me. I had wanted to dive with the sharks there for many years so as soon as I had the chance I planned a trip to visit a company that has been combining my two passions (shark diving and ecotourism) successfully for more than 10 years. I spent three weeks diving with Beqa Adventures Divers and it was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life!

My plan is to do something useful for shark conservation and visiting BAD was one of my top priorities. This company is unique. As well as having one of the best teams of people in the business (fun, experienced, responsible and passionate) they are also "a marine conservation project that includes a dive operation, and not vice versa" (www.fijisharkdive.com). If you want to have an incredible experience diving with spectacular massive sharks but you also care about their long-term preservation, then you should definitely go diving with Beqa Adventures Divers.

The life of the remaining marine top predators is in our hands and one of the most powerful tools to preserve them is ecotourism. A true eco-touristic company employs local people and reduces the impact on the environment. This will not just improve their economic situation but also win the competition with other destructive activities, like unsustainable fishing. One of the most important lessons I learned with BAD is that to achieve the long-term preservation of nature it is fundamental to involve the local communities emotionally and economically. This, by consequence, will also help them. BAD provides local Fijians a motivation to protect the environment in which they live while also increasing their standard of life. This is actually what an influential scientist in the western hemisphere E.O. Wilson advises in my favourite book *The Future of Life*: "Make conservation



profitable. Find ways to raise the income of those who live in and near the reserves" ... "engage them professionally in its protection" ... "demonstrate to the governments, especially of developing countries, that ecotourism ... can yield more income than logging and agriculture of the same land". In this case I will adapt the last phrase to fishing activities.

Nature tourism is widely recognised as one of the best ways to achieve the goals of sustainable development in regions that present natural attractions. Unfortunately it can also contribute to the deterioration of the natural landscape and the loss of biodiversity when it is not well managed (Declaration of Québec 2002). To avoid this it is very important to think about the long-term impact these activities may have and to use empirical evidence. For example, feeding sharks to bring them close to tourists is a polemic activity that can benefit the population, but without collecting the relevant data we cannot really know if we are damaging or helping them. Luckily I got to see the scientific research going on at BAD with their seven shark species. They have been taking data since they started working with the sharks many years ago and this gives them the information they need to help determine if feeding them is changing their life cycle or not.

This is so important because it allows the conservationists to measure the effects these activities have on the marine environment. I had the amazing opportunity to stay with a group of people who work together with BAD doing shark research. They are called Project Abroad - Fiji and I totally love their enthusiasm and energy! They receive young volunteers who are passionate about sharks to help them with their research as well as actively working within the local community on mangrove reforestation, recycling and shark education initiatives. I learned about their scientific methods and interesting results during my stay there. By chance my friend from Colombia, the shark scientist Diego Cardeñoso, was working as a principal investigator there! It was really awesome to meet passionate shark conservationists like Ingrid Sprake and Mike Neuman who are doing successfully what I plan to do in another location in the world! I can highly recommend that if you are interested in shark diving and want to go with the best then you should go and visit my friends at Beqa Adventure Divers! ■

Elena



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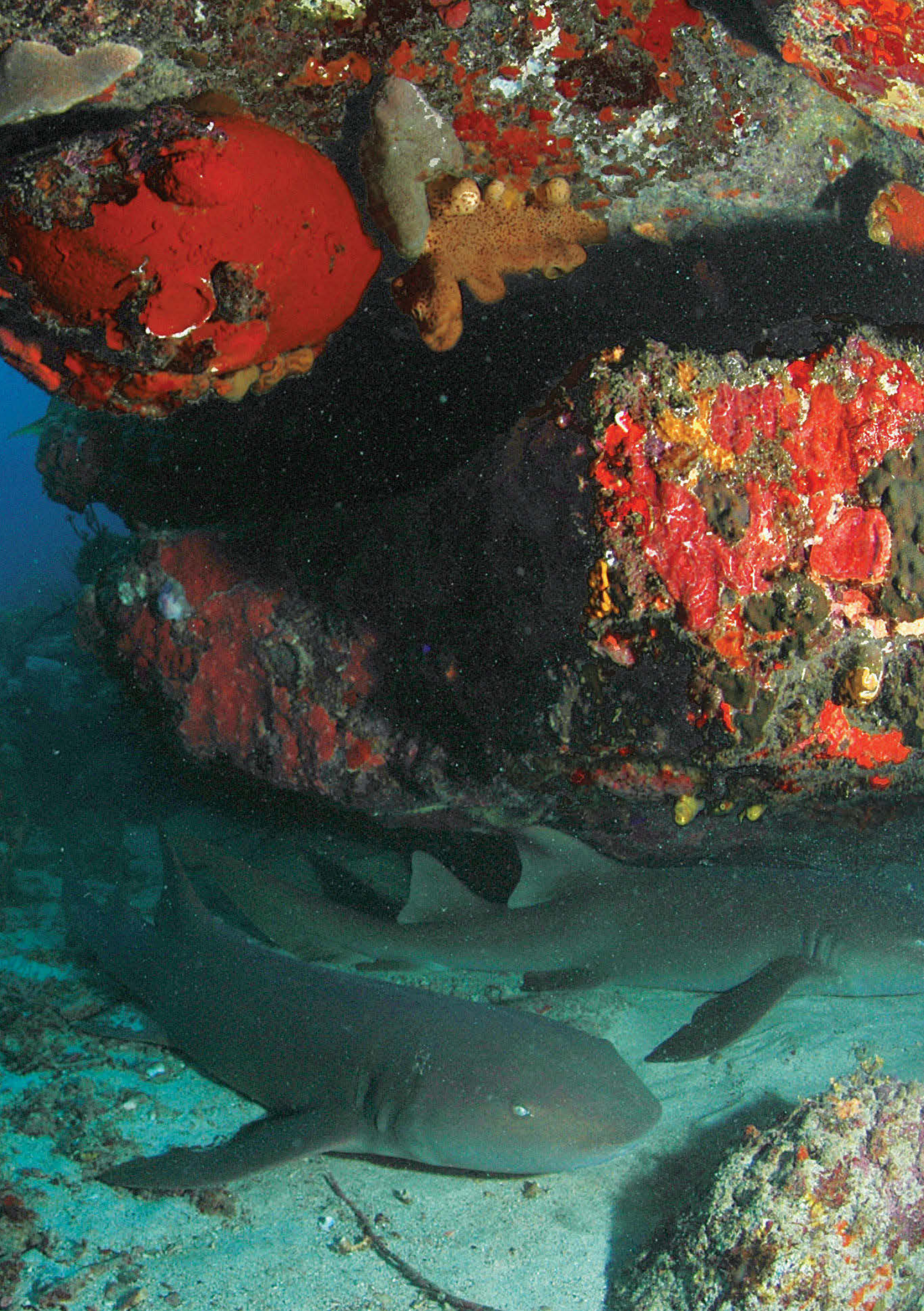


A full-page underwater photograph serves as the background. In the upper right, a large, colorful coral formation with shades of yellow, orange, and red hangs down. In the lower left, a scuba diver is visible, wearing a mask and a purple BCD, with a large camera and a bright light attached to their gear. The water is a deep blue, and the overall scene is dimly lit, with light from the diver's light illuminating the surrounding coral and sand.

The Golden ROCK

DAVID JONES had never heard of Saint Eustatius, but this quiet corner of the Caribbean soon had him under its spell and he left feeling totally enchanted with the little island

Photographs by DAVID JONES



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I know exactly what you're thinking - you haven't heard of it! And to be totally honest, neither had I until I actually ended up there. It all happened by chance. I was fortunate enough to have found myself invited onto a small sailing vessel that was undertaking research into the problem of plastic pollution in the Caribbean. I had met the boat in Guadeloupe, one of the French Caribbean islands, and during the first evening while we waited in the marina for one of the scientists to arrive, we began to look at the charts and discuss our plan for the next ten days. The skipper was pretty amenable to going wherever we decided and eventually a plan evolved. It was December and given the wind and stormy weather at the time, it revolved around making short but sensible passages across open seas and then heading up the west side of the islands for protection, ultimately arriving at a safe harbour before nightfall. The natural distance between the various islands suited the speed of the vessel, the weather and the sea conditions. The logical stages of the journey ended at Ile de St Bartholomey which, as it was also part of the French Caribbean, ensured there was a convenient and relatively simple return flight back to Guadeloupe.

As we followed the route we had plotted on the chart in anticipation of the days ahead, most of the islands sounded familiar even though I had never been to them, each one conjuring up its own images in my mind. Sailing from Guadeloupe we were to go around the west side before crossing to the volcanic island of Monserrat. Then it was onto Nevis via the uninhabited island of Redonda, a steep-sided rock that was home to thousands of nesting frigate birds and a herd of feral goats. From Nevis we would sail on to St Kitts, pause to photograph the marina development that was devastating the once-rich ecosystem of the Great Salt Lake, and then head to the northern tip of the island before making the short 12-mile crossing to... St Eustatius? It was logical, it was on the way to where we wanted to be, but unlike all of the other surrounding islands, none of us had heard of it. We looked it up in the guide book. 'The Caribbean island where time has stood still' was one description. 'Step back into a Caribbean of 30 years ago' was another. It was all very intriguing and rather exciting.



Fluke of an old anchor, now coral-encrusted



Turtle cruising in the shallows

"One of the main sites is Blue Bead Hole, so called because of the possibility of finding one of the blue beads that were made in the early 18th century and used around the world as a form of trade with indigenous populations"

It was just after lunch when we left the shelter of St Kitts. Although it was only a short jump, the north-easterly wind had picked up and the swell had increased. In the distance we could see the volcanic peak that dominated Saint Eustatius, as they did on so many other Caribbean islands. However 'The Quill' stood out as that perfect volcano shape that a child would draw if you asked them. As we rounded the southern tip of the island and, thankfully, sailed into sheltered water we could marvel at this lovely forest-covered mountain. At 600m, it dominated the isolated villages that were scattered around its slopes.

Saint Eustatius, or Statia as it is known locally, is a small island, only 12 square miles inhabited by a population of 4,000, with a few small settlements and one larger town, Oranjestad. The capital rests above the cliffs on the west side of the island, nestling in a natural saddle between the Quill and a smaller peak to the north. The name is Dutch, as is the official language, as the island, which was originally sighted by Columbus, was taken over by the Dutch in 1636 at the end of their war with Spain. It remains a municipality of the Netherlands.

Compared with its close neighbours, the bustling tourist and cruise ship destinations of St Bartholomey, St Kitts and Antigua, this island is a sleepy backwater. But it wasn't always the case. There is some great history about this place. It is a naturally deep water harbour and strategically located from both a military and a trading perspective. Add to that neutrality and freedom from customs duties, and you have a recipe for a major point of focus for trade. In the 17th and 18th century, the island was one of the busiest and most-prosperous ports in the region, with around 20,000 inhabitants and thousands of visiting vessels. Its inhabitants became so wealthy that it even became known as The Golden Rock.



Large stingray

Those days are long gone, but as you stroll along cobbled streets past old colonial-style houses, archaeological digs and historic sites, or walk the coastline of 'Buccaneer's Bay' and 'Gallows Bay', it is very easy to let your imagination go to get a sense of what it used to be like.

There are three dive centres on the island, all of which offer the same dive sites. We dived with Golden Rock Dive Centre (www.goldenrock-dive.com) for no other reason than the centre was right on the harbour side and we had taken his mooring when we first arrived (much to his annoyance), so felt we owed him something. Glenn, the owner, has been on the island for many years and clearly knew his stuff. His first dive briefing began with an explanation that this was 'probably the best diving in the Caribbean'. It was a claim that I had heard many times before, but given that we hadn't even heard of the place before, its obscurity might indeed result in a more-pristine marine ecosystem than some of its neighbouring islands. I was hopeful anyway.

The first dive was a reef of coral-encrusted lava flows. These fingers of rock stretching out to sea had been formed around 40,000 years ago by molten lava, creating an underwater seascape of ridges and gullies. The volcano has been dormant for years, but its legacy in the form of this volcanic topography provided an ideal habitat for many forms of marine life. We had been told to expect a lot of life, plenty of variety, minimal currents, and some fantastic corals. We were not disappointed. As we explored some of the pristine corals there was clearly a very healthy ecosystem going on here. Halfway through the dive, the arm and fluke of a huge anchor emerged from the reef, a reminder of the heyday of this tiny spot in the Caribbean. Old anchors are a frequent occurrence here. Under the ledges crayfish were in abundance, not in ones and twos, but in tens and 20s. Sleeping nurse sharks were also hiding under the reef, blacktips skirted the edge of our vision and honeycomb trunkfish hovered strangely on their tail fins. Apparently this was just an 'ordinary' dive, and the best was yet to come. Okay, now Glenn had my attention!

In the days when there might have been hundreds of ships in the harbour, there were inevitably some casualties. There are a number of old wrecks around the island, several are located close to the shore, and some even sitting on top of another. At first glance you might miss the wrecks, but look closely and use your imagination. While the timber ships have long since gone, their ballast stones are piled high, creating ornate artificial reefs that teem with life. The sand that surrounds these isolated underwater habitats are home to a large number of rays, some of which are enormous, while the ballast and coral maze provides refuge for turtles in large numbers, crustaceans, several species of morays and plenty of other marine life. This was really rather good.

As well as historical wrecks, the island also has some more modern



"The wreck, an old cable-laying vessel, lies on its side and there is a 40-metre penetration through the middle of the main structure; a really good dive"

wrecks. The Charles L Brown (yes, it is known locally as the Charlie Brown) was sunk in around 31m of water in 2003. It is an impressive wreck that attracts a lot of life. Barracuda, grouper, and horse-eye jacks are permanent residents, and soft and hard corals have started to take hold. The wreck, an old cable-laying vessel, lies on its side and there is a 40-metre penetration through the middle of the main structure; a really good dive.

For macro life, there is also plenty to see. One of the main sites is Blue Bead Hole, so called because of the possibility of finding one of the blue beads that were made in the early 18th century and used around the world as a form of trade with indigenous populations. As well as shrimps, crabs and flying gurnards, look out as well for the remarkable and beautiful pike blenny. These shy creatures will normally disappear into their burrows as you approach. However, they are also fiercely territorial and respond aggressively to a well-placed mirror underwater, coming out with all guns, and sails, blazing.

I have to say, Statius has pretty much everything I want from a diving destination. Walls, reefs, gentle drifts, wrecks, history - plenty of variety, really. The whole of the island has been designated as a marine park and there is no anchoring, or fishing allowed. As a result it has a healthy, rich and diverse marine ecosystem. There is much here that other Caribbean islands could learn from! If you want to party all night to Bob Marley, don't bother putting this island on your wish list. But if you are looking for some amazing diving, peace, tranquillity and beauty, this small island that you have probably never even heard of before, could very well do it for you. ■

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW SAINT EUSTATIUS



HOW TO GET THERE

Travelling from the UK, the easiest way is to fly into St Maarten via Paris and then take one of the regular flights the following day to Statius. At the time of writing, there are some very reasonably priced flights to St Maarten.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

You can dive in Saint Eustatius all year round.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A valid passport with six months left to expiry.

CURRENCY

US dollar (£1 = US\$1.52).

WHERE TO EAT AND MEET

You can eat and drink at the main hotels and there are also a number of other local bars and restaurants. The local delicacies are goat and oxtail and both are cooked in a variety of forms. Well worth trying. Fish and seafood plays a major part on most menus, as you would expect.

VERDICT

Saint Eustatius might not be one of those islands that immediately springs to mind when you are considering a Caribbean diving holiday, but David Jones was enchanted by its blend of walls, reefs, gentle drifts and wrecks, all steeped in history.

ENCHANTING ABOVE. UNBELIEVABLE BENEATH.



Statia has diving like no other destination in the Caribbean. Coral-covered walls and pinnacles are home to black grey reef sharks, eagle rays, and turtles. The shallower reefs have been carved from volcanic fingers and the fish life is abundant with rare species like flying gurnards, high hats, spotted drum fish, jack-knife fish, and huge lobsters making daily showings. Hundreds of critters make their home in unending cracks and ledges, and the shallow sea floor surrounding the island is scattered with archeological sites and wrecks, which are home to both history and lively marine life.

For more information, visit www.StatiaTourism.com.



EXPLORER IN GRENADA



Aquanauts Grenada has added yet another scuba toy to its wide range of services - the Hollis Explorer Sport electronic semi-closed rebreather.

Instructors Paul, Reece and Peter took the new units for a ride and got certified on them. Here is their account of the experience:

"Diving the Explorer for the first time was interesting to say the least! Some buoyancy issues and feeling not fully in control were a part of it in the beginning. But the first thing that hits you in the pool is the silence; with the exception of the occasional bubble coming from the back, it is eerily silent. After the pool session we go out for our first open water dive in a protected bay where it is nice and calm. Again as we descend the silence hits you like a wall, even with four people in the water. We drop in and find the perfect trim; with the tank across the body and at the lower back means you hang horizontal perfectly. Even on the ascent you keep this trim. On that and subsequent dives we fine tune everything and buoyancy gets better and we notice how close to all the marine life we get. Not only

the fish but the large rays and turtles are not as afraid due to the fact we don't make as much noise as the other divers. For photography or even just to watch the natural behaviour of the life underwater, the difference is amazing - getting so much closer and having them act a lot more naturally, almost ignoring you as they go about their daily business. Let's not forget the air consumption - two one-hour dives can easily be done on the single five-litre tank. The nitrox you're breathing is comfortably warm and moist due to the scrubber cleaning out the CO₂." Grenada's dive sites are ideal for the Explorer diver - lots of marine life at various depths to explore. The Hollis Explorer Sport electronic semi-closed rebreather is ideal for a diver who wants to get closer to marine life but does not have that much technical diving inclination or experience. The unit runs pretty much automatically and a certification course can be done within three days.

Aquanauts offers Explorer packages together with the True Blue Bay Resort - come out for a week of silent diving! ■



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Photograph by Stuart Philpott



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DISCOVER THE 'SPICE ISLAND'

Grenada, with its lush, pristine landscapes, has the perfect balance, appealing to adventure seekers, beach dwellers or couples looking for a romantic destination. On this picturesque and petite island, you can go from swimming in the crystal-clear waters of Grand Anse Beach to trekking through the rainforest of Seven Sisters Waterfalls, all within a day.

With less than 110,000 inhabitants and only 133 square miles of land, this tri-island state (that's Grenada and its smaller neighbours Carriacou and Petite Martinique) in the eastern Caribbean appears almost invisible on the world map, but despite its size, is widely known for its abundance of spices, unspoilt beauty and friendly people.

Grenada gained its name in 1763, when the British gained control from the French, who called the country 'La Grenada', which originates from 'Granada', which was given by the Spaniards in the 1520s. When the British regained control, they failed in their attempts to rid the island of French influences imposed since 1649 and now, years on, the islands reveal influences of Amerindian customs, and French and English settlement fused with African, East Indian and Caribbean ancestry.

With average temperatures ranging from 24 degrees C to 30 degrees C, Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique are a scuba diver's dream destination, but there is plenty to keep non-divers occupied topside.

Beach lovers will be thrilled by picture-perfect sandy expanses such as Grand Anse Beach, Morne Rouge Beach and Magazin Beach in St Georges, Levera Beach in St Patrick, and La Sagesse Beach in St David - once ranked third among the Ten Most Tropical Beaches by the Sunday Times. History buffs will be enthralled by the likes of Fort Matthew, the Grenada National Museum, the Belmont Estate and the River Antoine rum distillery - the oldest functioning water-propelled distillery in the Caribbean.

For those into nature, there is much to see, including the Grand Etang and Levera National Parks, innumerable waterfalls, thick rainforest and award-winning gardens brimming with colourful flowers and plants.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2005, Lance Corporal Johnson Beharry VC, a Grenadian British Army Soldier, was awarded the highest military decoration - otherwise known as the Victoria Cross - for saving the lives of members of his unit on two occasions. To date, he is the youngest recipient and first man to be awarded the Victoria Cross since 1982.



DIVE INTO GRENADA



Thanks to the sheer amount of sunken metal - both genuine maritime mishaps and man-made artificial reefs - surrounding the island, Grenada has earned the moniker of 'shipwreck capital of the Caribbean', but there is so much more to the island than just wreck diving. The nutrient-rich waters sweeping through the eastern Caribbean have ensured that Grenada's reefs are among some of the healthiest in the region, smothered in prolific coral and sponge growth and boasting explosive populations of reef fish and crustaceans. Whether you are a raw novice taking your first tentative steps into the blue yonder, a qualified diver wanting to expand your skills, or a seasoned veteran looking for your next fix, Grenada has reefs and walls with names like Purple Rain, Japanese Gardens, Wibbles Reef, Windmill Shallows and Northern Exposure that are perfect for you and ripe for exploration. But let's get back to those shipwrecks. If you aren't a metal-head with a lust for rust, don't be so quick to dismiss these sunken attractions. Each and every wreck that lies off the coast of Grenada is coated in encrusting corals and sponges and absolutely teeming with marine life of all shapes and sizes, from tiny blennies to nurse sharks, eagle rays and barracuda. Whether sunk as the result of an accident, or on purpose, the wrecks are now a thriving reef in every sense of the word, and just swimming around them is an amazing experience. If you are a dedicated wreckie, then rejoice, because Grenada has wrecks large and small. From small, but perfectly formed little wrecks such as the Veronica L, Rhum Runner and MV Hildur to the likes of the Shakem, Hema I and King Mitch, and not forgetting the flagship of this impressive fleet, the behemoth Bianca C, the so-called 'Titanic of the Caribbean'.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1961, when the Italian cruise liner Bianca C caught fire and sank, hundreds of Grenadians rushed to the aid of those onboard, feeding, sheltering and clothing them as needed. Today, a statue known as the 'Christ of the Deep' still stands on the Carenage in the town of St George as an expression of gratitude for the great acts of kindness to the people of Grenada.



GRENADA UNDERWATER SCULPTURE PARK

One of the undoubted highlights for snorkellers and novice divers - and even experienced divers who want to see something different, or are into their underwater photography - is the Grenada Underwater Sculpture Park.

The sculptures of this underwater gallery very much reflect Grenada's culture, and are fashioned from a variety of media, but predominantly simple substrates including concrete and rebar, which creates an ideal substrate on which marine life may develop. They are sympathetically located to enhance the reef, making natural use of its varied topography of craggy gullies and sandy patches.

As artificial reefs, these sculptures are proving highly successful so far in attracting a stunning array of varied marine life. In doing so and attracting visitors, they have indeed fulfilled a role in easing the environmental pressure on other reefs in the locality.

The vast amount of the sculptures come from the hands of Jason deCaires Taylor, but his works have now been joined by other pieces from fellow artists Troy Lewis, Rene Froehlich and Jefferson Thomas.



DISCOVER CARRIACOU



Carriacou and Petite Martinique boast the most-beautiful coral reefs. Carriacou - the larger of the two - is known as the 'Land of Reefs', with shallow clear waters that are ideal for snorkelling. Occupants of both islands are independent and fiercely traditional - the inhabitants are primarily of French origin and a Patois (broken French) is spoken throughout the island,

particularly in rural areas. A lot of the non-standard English used by the people is derived from European settlers on the island.

On the shores of Carriacou, you will see rows of locally built boats, from small fishing sloops to large trading schooners. The village of Windward was home to a group of Scottish boat builders who settled in Carriacou during the 19th century and passed on their practices, which are still

used in boat building today.

French settlers were the first on Petite Martinique, which is an island not phased by modernity. Petit Martiniquians make their livelihood from boat-building and fishing - a skill they have mastered, which is fascinating to hear about and witness. If you're seeking a more-authentic island experience, a short trip by ferry or local aircraft will transport you to the islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

GRENADA DIVE ASSOCIATION

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What's New

OUTWELL ENCOUNTER TENTS

(SRP: £64.99 - £169.99 | €88.13 - €230.52)



The new Outwell Encounter Collection of lightweight tents is ideal for active couples and young families. Freedom is the watchword with two stunning tent ranges - Cloud and Earth - created using time-proven tunnel and dome tent designs to provide comprehensive reliable options for long diving week-ends, touring and those spontaneous summer getaways.

All Encounter tents are made from the brand's exclusive Moroccan Blue/ Neutral Grey Outtex 3000 flysheet fabric with a 3,000mm hydrostatic head waterproof rating for reliability and durable performance combined with easy care and maintenance. A detachable bathtub groundsheet cuts out draughts, water ingress and crawling insects. Quality, durable fibreglass poles are used for fast pitching through the Power Mesh Pole Sleeves that mimic the aerodynamic properties of the flat pole sleeve found in many technical tents. Other Encounter features include D-shaped door entries for easy access; luminous guylines for safety; and the unique Taped Hanging Point System which attaches the inners with a toggle through each suspension point that is taped to the tent for strength and security.

Earth tunnel tents (£64.99-£169.99) comprise four models that sleep two, three, four and five respectively in single bedrooms that sit behind the large porch area. This is lit by side windows with vents above to keep the area light and airy. All tents have a large D-shaped front door and the Earth 3 to 5 tents also have L-shaped side doors.

Cloud tents (£69.99-£149.99) provide similar options to the Earth, but in the dome style for added choice, with headroom concentrated at the apex of the inner tent rather than at the front of the inner tent and porch.

www.outwell.com

TUSA SCA-160 (SRP: £57.50 | €77.98)

The SCA-160 is a compact wrist compass in a durable boot with a strap. The compass features a lockable bezel with a side window for easy reading and a luminescent dial face.

www.cpspartnership.co.uk



URSUIT FIR DEEP HEAT SYSTEM

(SRP: £300 | €406.83)

The Ursuit FIR Deep Heat System Thermal Vest consists of a comfortable fleece vest, three thermal pads, battery and charger. The heating power of the vest can be set to three different levels and, depending on the heat level, the battery lasts between three to five hours.

The warming effect of the vest is based on FIR (Far Infrared Ray) radiation, which is an electromagnetic radiation. Electromagnetic radiation is a part of our natural surroundings (radio waves, microwaves, x-ray, ultra-violet light, etc), and the energy of FIR radiation causes movement between the molecules of the receiving material, which in turn creates heat in the body.

FIR radiation reaches in the region of 3-5cm into the human body, hence why it is usually called 'deepwarmth', and the warming lasts longer because this is able to heat blood circulation and muscles.

www.liquidsports.co.uk



APEKS SPOOLS (SRP: £43-£70 | €58.31-€94.93)



Apeks, acclaimed manufacturers of regulators, have plenty of new products on the market in 2015, including these nifty anodised aircraft-grade aluminium spools. The spools come in three sizes - 15 metres (£43), 30 metres (£60) and 45 metres (£70) - and the orange line and leader are made from Eldelrid and Dyneema respectively. They come with a 316 stainless steel bolt/snap. The Apeks spools are intended for use when cave diving, technical-diving activities, search and rescue and a wide variety of diving applications. The unique flared design allows for ease of winding while wearing gloves, and the large diameter centre hole was also designed with gloves in mind. The colour coding allows for ease of identification of each size, and the line is sewn instead of tied to increase strength.

www.apeks.co.uk

DIVESANGHA ALL SEASONS HOODIE

(SRP: £80 - £90 | €108.49 - €122.05)



Our all-seasons hoodie, featuring a functional Pontetorto Tecnospacer fabric that provides thermal insulation and great breathability with the comfort of cotton. The men's hoodie (£90) has a classic, loose fit, and features a back yoke and a hood lined with soft fleece, and a two-way zip. The women's hoodie (£80) features a comfortable and stylish A-line, a back yoke, hood, and a hand-warmer pocket lined with soft fleece. Both hoodies feature Divesangha's original HUNG DRY™ system and are ethically made in the UK. The prices include free worldwide shipping and free dry bag with each order.

www.divesangha.com

INTOVA ACTION LIGHT (SRP: £150 | €203.41)

Compact, lightweight and ergonomic, the Action Light was designed for use with Action Cams, but is a great complement to any video camera. A wide and even 120° beam angle provides consistent lighting with no hot spots or edge rings.

Waterproof to 60m, the kit includes a bracket with standard tripod mount and GoPro adapter. The rechargeable Li-ion battery delivers 640 lumens of light with a burn time of more than two hours, and the low power setting doubles the burn time. A CREE XM-L2 LED with 100,000 hour lifetime is controlled by Intova thermal protection circuitry with auto dim. The rugged polycarbonate battery casing doubles as a hand grip for ease of use and panning control.

www.cpspartnership.co.uk



TUSA ROLLER DUFFLE (SRP: £109 | €147.81)

The RD-2 is Tusa's newest roller duffle bag with large compartments and heavy-duty wheel system. It has a capacity of 115 litres, a water-resistant back, large outer double-zippered pocket, one carrying handle and a telescopic towing handle.

www.cpspartnership.co.uk



INTOVA NOVA HD (SRP: £179 | €242.74)



The Intova Nova HD 1080p Video Waterproof Camera builds on the success of the Sport HD II, but now offers a water-resistant RF remote control which gives additional versatility to this rugged camera.

The Nova HD can capture 1080p video footage and 12 megapixel photographs, is depth-rated to 60m, and will float if it happens to come off its mount. It has a 140 degree wide-angle lens, 1.5-inch LCD screen, manual white balance and a 4x digital zoom. The battery will last for two hours with the LCD screen on, and three hours if it is switched off.

The set includes a Nova HD camera, waterproof RF remote controller, Micro USB cable, wrist strap, lens cap, silicone grease, quick start guide, user manual on Mini CD, and optional accessory brochure.

www.cpspartnership.co.uk

Each month, the Sport Diver Test Team assembles to rate and review a selection of diving equipment from a range of manufacturers

Gear on test

Apeks Black Sapphire (SRP: £625 | €841.28)



The second stage looks very eye-catching thanks to the metal insert

Mark: As detailed in the December issue, Apeks Marine Equipment celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2014, and to mark the occasion, the company released a limited-edition regulator, the Black Sapphire, which was unveiled at the Dive 2014 show. I have been a dedicated Apeks fan for many years, and am the proud owner of a 30th anniversary limited-edition model, the Black Pearl, so I was looking forward to getting the Black Sapphire wet.

The first stage of the Black Sapphire is based around the old-faithful environmentally sealed, over-balanced diaphragm XTX200, but this all-new first stage has a number of neat design features, including an extra low-pressure port with a finned heat exchanger routed

out of the bottom of the stage, which gives even more routing options, a neat swivel on the primary regulator hose where it joins the first stage to reduce any drag or pull on the second stage, as well as quite an angular look around the chrome Apeks logo, which really 'pops' off the durable, hard-wearing PVD (Physical Vapour Deposition) finish which coats the rest of the first stage. Black Sapphire is engraved subtly directly into the body of the first stage.

The second stage is instantly recognisable as an Apeks product, but boasts an aircraft-grade, anodised metal inlay with a blue cast that deliberately still bears faint tooling marks from the precision machining to ensure it isn't mistaken for a piece of run-of-the-mill

plastic moulding, and is printed with the Black Sapphire name and '40 years' to mark the anniversary.

So it is obviously an Apeks regulator, albeit tarted-up with some neat design features and tweaks, but what does it dive like? Well, I've had the Black Sapphire for several months to enable me to get plenty of dives on it. As you'd expect, it delivers an ultra-smooth, dry breathe in all positions, and the venturi and cracking resistance controls both make a noticeable difference to the performance, allowing you to fine-tune the regulator to your personal taste. I particularly liked the new angular design of the cracking control knob, which was easy to locate and operate even with thick neoprene gloves on. I have had it in

Apeks Black Sapphire (SRP: £625 | €841.28)



The Black Sapphire is a good-looking regulator



Neat angular design on the venturi lever and cracking control knob



The first stage features an extra port and a nifty PVD finish



The Black Sapphire in the murky, freezing depths of Vivian Quarry

water temperatures down to 2 degrees C and it steadfastly refused to freeflow, even when I purged it for more than ten seconds at a depth of 25m with the mouthpiece facing towards the surface.

To make the Black Sapphire stand out from the crowd even more, it comes packaged in a zipped, padded regulator carry-case bearing the name Black Sapphire moulded into the front, and within this is a cardboard inlay which details the origins of the Black Sapphire and, uniquely, is signed on the back by all of the Apeks Marine Equipment employees.

There will only be 5,000 numbered Black Sapphire regulators produced, and once they are gone, they're gone, so this is set to be a future collectors item, as the Black Pearl was before it. I'd suggest you locate one - and fast!

www.apeks.co.uk

Tough Box TBX (SRP: £238.99 | €321.69)

Mark: The Tough Box lives up to its name as soon as you get it out of its packaging. It is a big old lump, and weighs in at 12kg, but just by handling it, you get a feeling it is designed to cope with whatever you can throw at it. Everything is over-engineered for maximum strength and durability, from the grab handles on either end to the chunky plastic wheels.

Entry to the spacious interior of the box is gained through a removable panel in the top. You just lever open two metal clips and the lid can be lifted off, but the metal clamp arrangement can be left in-situ around the opening for ease of use. Once this panel is in place and the levers are closed, the box is water-tight, and will float (depending on how much weight you shoe-horn inside it, of course!). You can even pop a padlock through both metal clamps for added security when travelling (Tough Box can supply TSA-approved locks as an optional extra).

Moving the Tough Box around is easy, thanks to the powder-coated metal frame which houses a spring-loaded telescopic handle. This locks into place to avoid it accidentally opening when it is being transported.

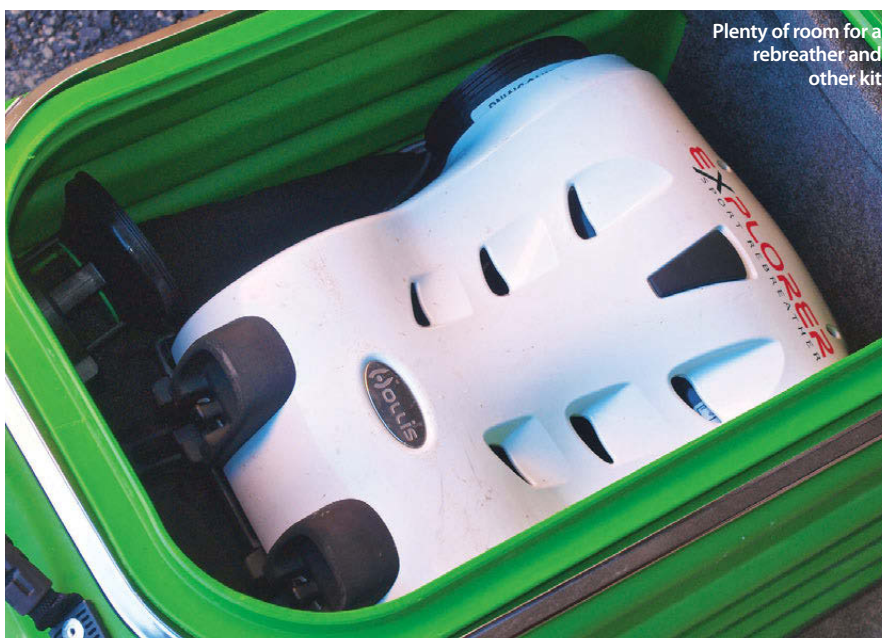
The TBX has a 140-litre capacity, but this drops slightly if you fit the optional high-density protective foam inserts. However, this goes in in pieces, so you can put in and remove as required. For instance, without the inserts, it will swallow a Hollis Explorer eSCR when it is disassembled without any fuss, with plenty of room left for ancillary equipment likes fins, masks, etc. When I had the Explorer fully assembled it wouldn't go into the TBX and let me put the lid on, but I just put in a few of the foam inserts and it securely held the unit in ready-to-dive mode with just one side poking out of the top. With normal scuba kit, it will take two full sets of diving kit, minus drysuits and undersuits, which made transporting test kit to the water's edge at Vivian easy.

If you have multiple TBXs, they will stack on top of one another and 'lock' into place, which I could see being beneficial in the back of a dive centre minibus, for instance. The Tough Box may be expensive when compared with a basic Gear Gulper, for instance, but put it up against some of the other wheeled storage cases on the market and it suddenly looks like quite a bargain. If you have a valuable CCR or tech kit that you want to ship out to some exotic destination in complete safety, or even just cart about securely in your vehicle right here in the UK, then the TBX makes great sense. NB: The Tough Box TBX represents even better value for money at the moment thanks to an introductory price of £190.

www.adventure-o-d.co.uk



The Tough Box TBX is easy to transport around



Plenty of room for a rebreather and other kit

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Zeagle Zena (SRP: £398.65 | €536.60)

Penney Evans: Various manufacturers now do women-specific BCDs and wings, and this Zeagle Zena is right up there with the best of them. It is unusual in that it has an elasticated, zippered front, and then adjustable pinch-clips on the shoulders - as you'd expect on a BCD - but also dual straps on either side. This innovative arrangement allows a huge amount of personal customisation to get the ideal fit. Small 'up top' and a little broader around the hips? You can tighten the top strap and loosen the bottom one, which will keep the BCD in place but give a much-higher degree of comfort. Bit more 'busty' but with a slim waist? Then you can do the opposite, loosen the top strap and tighten the bottom one. It really does give this BCD the ability to suit a huge range of body shapes.

The integrated weight pockets can take a decent amount of weight, and there are non-dumpable trim pockets on one of the dual tank cambands. Zeagle's 'Ripcord' quick-release is fitted as standard and provides a swift method of dumping your weights in an emergency. If you are handing weights up to a zodiac crew member, you just have to unzip the pockets and pull out the weight. Thankfully, this jacket doesn't have any of the silly pinch-clip straps going across the top of the zippered pockets! There is a nifty little expandable weight pouch that can take a small spool and DSMB, or even a back-up torch, but which packs away to almost nothing when not in use. There are also four stainless-steel D-rings for attaching larger accessories. The rear wing gives plenty of lift to hold you on the surface, or keep you in a nice trim position underwater, and there are dual pull dumps on the lower rear.

The elasticated front panel, which features a subtle pattern design, comes in a wide range of colours - black, blue, grape, neon yellow, neon pink, floral white, floral blue, floral pink, and floral purple. You can even get them customised!

I found the Zena to be very comfortable once it was adjusted and set up for my shape. I am only short, and sometimes find women's BCDs are too long in the body for me, but this fit perfectly. I appreciated the side adjustment straps to fine-tune the fit.

In the water it was nice and streamlined. This was my first time in a drysuit in many, many years, and it was also my first time in the Zena, and I totally forgot I wasn't in my usual BCD - that's how good it is. It just felt so comfortable and everything was to hand, it instantly felt 'right'.

I like the styling, which is feminine but subtle, and the build quality seems rock solid, so I imagine you'd get many years of good service from this BCD.

NB: Additional front panels are available at £41.65 each for those who want to be able to colour-co-ordinate with various wet and drysuits.

www.zeagle.com

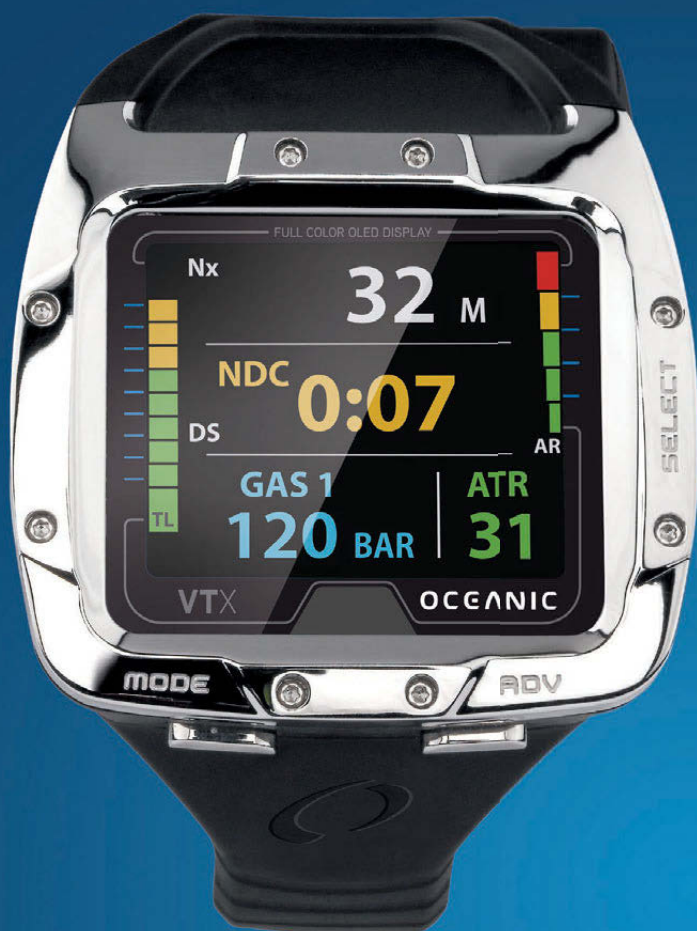
The Zena is an attractively designed BCD



The side straps allow for plenty of personalisation

Penney diving the Zena in Vivian Quarry





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GAS SWITCHING:	UP TO FOUR GASES (UP TO 100% O2)
CONNECTIVITY:	CABLE
INTERFACE PLATFORMS	PC / MAC
FIRMWARE UPDATES:	FIRMWARE UPDATES VIA INTERFACE
WARRANTY:	LIFETIME FOR ORIGINAL OWNER



Prices correct at time of print

WWW.OCEANICUK.COM | HERE2HELP@OCEANICUK.COM | 01404 891819

Oceanic Aeris Cyanea (SRP: £55 | €74.03)

Mark: After this Test Extra, I am left in a quandary - after years of struggling to find a mask to replace my super-comfy old-faithful IDI unit, I have now managed to come across not one but two that fit the bill perfectly. Previously, we had the Hollis M3 in Long Term Test and this became my new 'go-to' mask, but now I have just had the pleasure of diving in the Cyanea (from the same AUP parent company, but under the Oceanic badge) and it is an equally fabulous mask. The first thing you notice about the Cyanea is the strap. Gone is the traditional-style strap, or a neoprene variant, and instead you have a super-stretchy elastic number which looks like it belongs on a set of ski or snowboard goggles! The beauty of this is that you don't have any fatty buckles to deal with, or worry about breaking, and donning and doffing the mask is a piece of cake, even with thick neoprene or dry gloves on. There is even a snorkel-keeper loop sewn in for those that need it. The mask itself is a nice piece of kit too, with large lenses that give very good peripheral and downward fields of view. It is also very low profile, so a doddle to clear. The soft but firm skirt utilises some nifty ridges to ensure a good fit on your face. It is nice to see something genuinely new - or at least from a completely different field - being brought to diving masks, and I don't think it will be long before we see more companies bringing in elasticated straps such as this.

www.oceanicuk.com



The Oceanic Aeris Cyanea



Diving the Cyanea



Integrated snorkel keeper

Scubapro White Tip (SRP: £44.90 | €60.50) & K6 (SRP: £64.90 | €87)

Mark Evans: The Scubapro dive knives just missed out on the Group Test, so we are taking a look at them here.

The White Tip is a neat little knife which is designed to be mounted on your BCD via grommets or can even be attached to a low-pressure inflator hose on your regulator.

It has a 6.4cm stainless-steel blade that features a sharp cutting edge and a serrated section, and the plastic hilt is ergonomically shaped, sitting well in your hand, though it is maybe a little small for use in the UK as a primary knife. The White Tip is held securely in its sheath by a locking mechanism that can be quickly and easily released with one hand.

The K6 is a different beast altogether! This is a true throwback to the 'Rambo' knives of the past, when divers entered the water with Excalibur strapped to their leg!

This monster knife can be attached to your calf with the quick-release rubber straps supplied, and is easily withdrawn from the sheath by the push of a button.

The 15.5cm stainless-steel blade has a long sharp cutting edge, a handy line cutter and a heavily serrated section. It also has a stainless steel hammer built in to the hilt.

The chunky handle sits well in a gloved hand, making this one hell of a primary knife for use in colder waters.

www.scubapro.co.uk

The Scubapro K6 dive knife



The Scubapro White Tip



The K6 has a steel hammer built into the hilt



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Long-term test

Scubapro X-Black

NEW ARRIVAL



The Scubapro X-Black scored highly in our Group BCD Test, and now we have the opportunity to dive it for the next six months. The good-looking jacket features the exclusive AirFlex system, highlighted by the red bungees, that simplifies buoyancy control and guarantees high stability. Scubapro says this is one of their most feature-rich BCDs - it has a Super Cinch tank band, quick-release weights, non-dumpable trim weights, seven D-rings, knife grommets, two zippered pockets and a fully adjustable cummerbund - as well as one of the most comfortable even when fully inflated, thanks to its ergonomic cut.

Mark Evans,
www.scubapro.co.uk

INFORMATION

Date acquired	February 2015
Suggested retail price	£549
Number of dives	0
Time in water	0hrs 0mins

KUBI Dry Glove System

I have tried various drygloves in the past, and to be honest, I have never really got on with them. I find them a pain to get on and off, and I didn't like the loss of dexterity, particularly in the shallows.

Pete Wilson, UK distributor of KUBI, persuaded me to try a set, and boy, am I glad he did! These are a completely different animal to drygloves I have tried in the past. They are easy to get on and off, they are so thin it is like wearing 2mm gloves, yet they keep you toasty warm.



INFORMATION

Date acquired	February 2014
Suggested retail price	£156
Number of dives	1
Time in water	0hr 54mins

Mark Evans,
www.KUBIstore.com

Hollis Explorer eSCR

Another 54 minutes logged on the Explorer, this time in the low single digit temperatures of Vobster Quay in the company of Sport Diver contributor and photographer extraordinaire Jason Brown, who is also an Explorer diver. He hadn't had his unit out for some time, but proving how user-friendly it is, he had it set up and running sweetly in next to no time.

My unit hadn't been used since my 40m PADI crossover course with Matt Robinson back in November, and I'd moved house in the meantime, so it had been boxed up.

A quick overnight charge of the Life Support System and it was ready to go, and it took me less than 15 minutes to rig the eSCR from out of the box and set to enter the water.

It performed faultlessly during the dive, and yet again it showed what the unit can do - 54 minutes, including a stint down at 26m, and I only used 70 bar of 40 percent nitrox.

Mark Evans,
www.hollis.com



INFORMATION

Date acquired	November 2014
Suggested retail price	£4,199
Number of dives	6
Time in water	6hr 35mins

Fourth Element Arctic Expedition

The Arctic Expedition got its first workout underwater when I headed to Vobster Quay to dive with Jason on the Explorer. I was impressed with how warm it was, and it kept the chilly water temperature at bay. I would imagine if you stuck a base layer underneath it to add some extra total thickness, it would be close to the warmth of the range-topping Halo 3D.

I particularly liked the front pocket, which is just the right size for a set of car keys and is positioned ideally for you to reach through a semi-opened zip on the Argonaut.

Mark Evans,
www.fourthelement.com



INFORMATION

Date acquired	January 2015
Suggested retail price	£279
Number of dives	1
Time in water	0hr 54mins

BARE HDC Tech Dry

I have only had the opportunity to dive this suit six times so far, but it is showing its worth. Being a suit made with technical divers in mind (as well as the rest of us), it is cut a little more figure-hugging than some, but with 17 off-the-peg fittings you should find one for you.

So far, even though it has been slung in the bottom of my dive box and generally abused, it still looks good. I'm liking the big pockets with easy-to-grab flaps and the very comfortable boots, which have a neat Velcro-closing strap to help reduce air movement into your feet.



INFORMATION

Date acquired	October 2014
Suggested retail price	£1,699.15
Number of dives	6
Time in water	5hr 35mins

Mark Evans,
www.baresports.com

Aqualung Whites Fusion FIT



Now equipped with the Fusion FIT and the Ellie wetsuit boots, I press-ganged Penney into a dive in the frigid waters of Vivian Quarry in Llanberis, Wales. As we made the winding drive through Snowdonia, there was a thick fog in the chilly air and snow on the ground - it is safe to say she was not looking forward to venturing into the water.

Once she was fully bundled up into the Fusion undersuit, she was warming up to the idea, but battling into the suit nearly finished her off. As I found when I tested the Fusion, it is a bit of a faff to get into because of the inner 'bag' and stretchy outer layer design. There is a knack to it and I am sure with time it would become easier, but there was a certain amount of Muttley-like muttering going on in the back of the pick-up as she got into it this time around!

The first shock of cold water going inside the hood as we did a quick weight check in the confined area caused her to think twice about whether or not this was a good idea, but she soldiered on and we dropped down to the bottom of the quarry at around 16-18m. Initially a little hesitant, as she has not done much drysuit diving, within minutes she was finning around quite contentedly and, when I asked if she was warm enough, I got a firm 'okay' signal in return. I busied myself snapping shots of the suit and other Long Term Test and Test Extra gear and then asked if she was ready to go up. Surprisingly, she shook her head and gestured for us to have a bit of an explore. Coming from a dedicated warm-water diver, this is a true testament to how warm the Fusion FIT was keeping her!

INFORMATION

Date acquired	August 2014
Suggested retail price	£1,449
Number of dives	1
Time in water	0hr 25mins

Mark Evans,
www.aqualung.com/uk

Oceanic Zeo FDXi



An important thing you need to know about the Zeo - it has a lifetime warranty and free parts if you get it serviced annually within a month of its service due date. That should save you a few quid over the years and will help protect your investment.

With two high-pressure and four low-pressure ports on the first stage, I did not have any problem fitting the hoses and computer sender where I wanted everything.

INFORMATION

Date acquired	July 2014
Suggested retail price	£429
Number of dives	28
Time in water	27hr 35mins

Dave Hope,
www.oceanicuk.com

Mares Hybrid Pro Tec

Time for the Hybrid Pro Tec to go back to Mares. This BCD has covered some miles while it has been in our care, with Dave Hope in particular taking it on some lengthy overseas jaunts. It has coped admirably with anything we could throw at it, proving just as capable on a drysuited UK diver as on someone wearing a thin wetsuit abroad.

The ability to strip it down into a bare-essentials wing is a neat trick, though as we have said, unless you really need to drop some weight when packing, it is worth leaving the BCD in its full form so you can utilise all of its features. We all agreed that it was one of the most-comfortable jackets we had ever dived, and we are sad to see it go.



NB: The actual price of the Atomic BladeFins, which were End of Term last month, is £118.25

INFORMATION

Date acquired	July 2014
Suggested retail price	£485
Number of dives	34
Time in water	33hrs 25mins

Dave Hope,
www.mares.com

END OF TERM

Rebreather diving is becoming increasingly popular



5 REBREATHERS IN 5 DAYS

Tech rebreathers are *the* big thing at the moment, and these complex units can take some getting used to, but how about trying five different CCRs in five days?

STUART PHILPOTT did just that

Photographs by STUART PHILPOTT

Five rebreathers,
five days!



Rebreathers allow
divers to get closer to
marine life



Enjoying the silence surrounded by thousands upon thousands of schooling fish, I was reminded of what it was like to be on a rebreather. In the absence of noisy scuba bubbles, the shimmering wall of fish calmly parted and then closed around me.

I had travelled to Marina Rubicon Tech Centre at Playa Blanca on Lanzarote to try out five different rebreathers in five days. Some designs, like the AP Valves unit I was using, had been around for more than a decade. Others that I would be trying later in the week were brand new to the market. Chris Massaad, the owner of Marina Rubicon, would be my guide and 'babysitter' for the intro dives. Chris is a qualified instructor for seven different makes of rebreather and an instructor trainer for three, so I was in safe hands.

I wasn't planning to conduct an in-depth comparison/performance test of each unit. I didn't have enough experience or time for a thorough assessment. I was already certified on the Evolution and the Poseidon MKVI Discovery, and had some basic Revo experience. All in all I had a total of 60 hours logged. I truly believe that to get the best out of a rebreather, users have to own a unit rather than hire one out. Any comments I have made are purely based on a first-time user's perspective for comfort, fit, ease of use, interesting features, etc.

There was no bias with regards to my choice of rebreathers - they were the five units that Marina Rubicon had available. I completed a kind of 'intro' dive on each rebreather under the supervision of Chris. The idea was to show some of the innovative design styles and basically promote rebreathers as a whole. With this in mind there are a good number of new units coming onto the market which just shows how far they have come and where the future may well be going.

All five CCRs functioned extremely well, which is a stupidly obvious thing to say; otherwise they wouldn't be on sale in the first place! Most of the basic mechanics are the same, i.e. they all have a scrubber, counter lung, cells, electronic controller, etc. Experienced user Stefan Schmidt summed it up quite nicely: 'There aren't any bad rebreathers. It comes down to your intended use - cave diving, photography, deep



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wrecks, etc'. I have left out the suggested price tags as deals can vary between dive centres. As a rough guide, it will cost between £5,000 and £10,000 for a new unit with training included. Alternatively, there are quite a few second-hand rebreathers for sale.

Lanzarote winter water temps maxed out at 18-20 degrees C, so I was wearing my 2mm crushed neoprene drysuit. This suit is nice and warm but requires lots of additional weight to achieve neutral buoyancy (in hindsight a membrane suit would have been better). I had to make weighting adjustments for every unit and didn't always get it right. Marina Rubicon tech centre is extremely busy all year round. I noticed there was a huge variety of makes and models of rebreather out on the benches in different states of build. It was good to see so much positive energy flying about. I also met up with the world's first physically challenged rebreather instructor, Manthos Marras, who had just qualified on his Megalodon unit. There can't be many dive centres that offer such a diverse range of tech diving expertise and rebreather training. My five rebreathers in five days started off with the Evolution. I then used the JJ, Liberty, Pathfinder and, finally, the Megalodon. I worked on a different rebreather every day, assembling, packing the scrubbers, adjusting harnesses, weighting, taking photographs, etc. Chris would then talk me through the basics of each unit: familiarisation with button positions, HUDs and computers readouts. This was followed by the dive itself and then disassembly and flushing through, so all in all very busy times. I had booked into the Sandos Papagayo, a 4-star all inclusive, so at least I could crash out in relative luxury at the end of each day.

DIVE 1 / UNIT: EVOLUTION / TIME: 54 MINUTES / DEPTH: 21M / SITE: FLAMINGO

UK-owned company AP Valves are the 'big daddy' of rebreathers and have probably sold more units than any other brand. The first Inspiration Classic came off the production line back in 1996. The Evolution is the newer version that I first used in 2010 and used again this time



Bubble-free models are a photographer's dream

"This was my first time on a rebreather for several years, so I spent the first 20 minutes bouncing along the seabed trying to get my buoyancy right"

Happy divers



around. Long-term rebreather diver Tino de Rijk said: 'AP Valves are the most-tested unit in the world, especially for software, to make it more idiot-proof'. As far as I know, this is the only rebreather that is covered by a big plastic box. I'm not quite sure why. I guess it protects the unit. Some divers personalise their units with pictures or logos on the box. This was my first time on a rebreather for several years, so I spent the first 20 minutes bouncing along the seabed trying to get my buoyancy right. This particular unit had front-mounted counter lungs, which tend to obscure peripheral vision. Chris guided the group of five rebreather divers over to a huge shoal of bream. The fish didn't scatter in all directions, they stayed together. This reminded me of all the reasons why, as a photographer, I should own a rebreather.

It felt good to be back on an Evolution. I found the mouthpiece valve difficult to open and close, but it just took a little getting used to. Chris said: 'This is the most-established rebreather on the market and has the most users. It's compact with all the extras in one box'.

DIVE 2 / UNIT: JJ / TIME: 64 MINUTES / DEPTH: 16M / SITE: COLORADES

Since its release in March 2009 the Danish-built JJ has grown in popularity on the tech diving scene. I liked the metal rails welded on the main body of the unit so that extra stage cylinders and equipment can be clipped on. The metal framework kept the unit vertical when I was fitting cylinders and making adjustments on the bench.

Chris said: 'The JJ is the 4x4 of rebreathers. It's the easiest unit to set up and dive.' My buoyancy seemed to be spot on from the very first moment I hit the water. Whether this was because I had already gone through a familiarisation on the Evolution, or whether it was the unit itself, I really don't know. Maybe a bit of both!

I followed Chris down to the rocky reef below. The scuba divers 'bubbled off' in the opposite direction, so it was back to the sound of silence (apart from listening to my own breathing through the loop). There were plenty of swim-throughs underneath the reef packed full of cave sweepers and even the odd angel shark.

The unit has rear-mounted counter lungs which gave more room in front of me. I found the mouthpiece very hard and by the end of the dive my gums were hurting. On this particular JJ, I couldn't easily reach the manual diluent buttons as they were too high up on my shoulders.

DIVE 3 / UNIT: LIBERTY / TIME: 68 MINUTES / DEPTH: 20M / SITE: TWIN PIPES

This is a new Czech rebreather just released on the market with full CE-approval. Marina Rubicon was heavily involved in the initial testing

of the unit. Stefan Schmidt has clocked up around 70 hours underwater on the three in-house experimental units with no catastrophic problems encountered.

I am bigger (chubbier) than Stefan so it took a while to make adjustments to the harness straps. The clips were a unique design - like plane seatbelt clips, according to Stefan. All the buttons were big and chunky and easily accessible with or without gloves on. The HUD sat between my eyes rather than to one side, which I actually liked. There are two handsets using software and the unit has two independent controllers. The in-house designed software had lots of new features. For example, when performing a negative or positive loop test the display provides a percentage readout rather than having to rely on a visual check. Stefan said: 'The Liberty is designed for cave diving and is not for beginners. It's designed to bring divers back'.

The D-ring positions were okay for clipping on stage cylinders. I rolled off the RIB and made a free descent underneath the boat. There were two lengths of one-metre diameter pipe disappearing into the distance. I followed the pipes, stopping periodically at the concrete supports to check out the marine inhabitants. I really liked using the Liberty. Nice breathe.

DIVE 4 / UNIT: PATHFINDER / TIME: 46 MINUTES / DEPTH: 16M / SITE: TWIN PIPES

Innerspace Systems Corporation has been involved with rebreather technology since 1999. The Pathfinder is a recent addition to their product range. Of all the units, I thought this one would suit me best for underwater photography. The unit was lighter and more compact than the standard Megalodon, which probably made it a good travel option. I actually managed to walk down the pontoon ramp without stooping forward, so the unit must have been lighter!

This particular Pathfinder had been bought for Chris' wife Tash, and I soon realised that the top of the shoulder counter lungs were too small for me, especially when swimming against the current. I also found the BCD inflator/deflator hard to reach and the breathing loop was very

"Since its release in March 2009, the Danish-built JJ has grown in popularity on the tech-diving scene"

close to my face, which obscured vision. The D-rings were easy to reach so I could clip on my stages without any help. Chris tried the unit after me and didn't have any problems at all. He is a few centimetres shorter than me and has a more-compact frame. The Pathfinder was the only unit that had a Wi-Fi link.

I watched disabled rebreather diver Manthos Marras conduct some training for his Megalodon instructor course. We followed him across the pipes onto the reef. It was strange to see a diver without fins on, but this didn't seem to restrict his movements in any way. My buoyancy was almost spot on by now. There are some great features on this rebreather. I really would like to try a bigger version next time around as I'm certain this would solve all of my grievances.

DIVE 5 / UNIT: MEGALODON / TIME: 44 MINUTES / DEPTH: 17M / SITE: COLORADES II

The Megalodon is larger and heavier than the Pathfinder. But then the Pathfinder is CE-approved to 60m and the Meg to 100m. Chris had nothing but praise for the US-made rebreather. 'You can't kill a Meg,' he said, 'it's virtually indestructible.' I could easily reach/read all of the Meg's buttons and gauges. The D-ring positions for attaching stage cylinders were easy to find and I could clip the cylinders on myself. This unit had front-mounted counter lungs. I seemed to make more adjustments to my buoyancy when I was using the front-mounted units.

Five rebreathers later and I was back to feeling comfortable again. I was even thinking more about my photography than worrying whether the unit was functioning correctly. I still looked at the Shearwater handset every so often and I couldn't help but monitor the HUD stuck in front of my face plate. I followed Chris and Claudio along the reef and quite happily manoeuvred up and down taking pictures without crashing into the rocks. We stopped and admired a slipper lobster and yet another angel shark camouflaged on the seabed. ■

OPTIONS	EVOLUTION	JJ	LIBERTY	MEGALODON	PATHFINDER
Country of origin	UK	Denmark	Czech	USA	USA
Released	2004	2009	2015	2006	Late 2011
Number of cells	3	3	4	3	3
CE depth rating	100m	100m	N/A	100m	60m
Counter lung position	Front or back	Back	Front	Front	Top of shoulder
Gas flow	L to R	L to R	L to R	R to L	R to L
Sofnolime weight	2-2.5kg	2.3kg	2.5kg	2.49kg	2.3kg
Controllers	2	1	2	1	1
Unit weight	24.5kg	34.2kg	N/A	35kg	15kg
Cylinder options	2 litre	3 litre	3 litre	2, 3 or 4 litre	2 litre
CO2 cell option	Yes	No	No	No	No
Tempstik	Yes	No	No	No	No
Bail out valve	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Frame/stand included	Protective box	Yes	Not standard	Yes	Yes
Re-chargable battery	Optional	No	Yes	Optional	Optional
Int deco software	In-house	Shearwater	In-house	Shearwater (optional)	Shearwater (optional)
Computer screen	LCD	LCD	OLED	LCD	OLED
Scrubber unit	Axial	Axial or Radial	Radial	Axial or Radial	Radial
Unit height	47.5cm	70cm	N/A	N/A	40cm
Unit width x depth	40 x 35cm	40 x 26cm	N/A	N/A	N/A
Scrubber duration	2-3 hours	3 hours	N/A	Axial 3-4 hours	3-4 hours



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Jill Heinerth joins the TEKCamp team in 2015



Photo credit: Rosemary E Lumby/The Underwater Marketing Company

TEKCamp 2015 continues to attract the biggest names in technical diving with another headline act joining the already star-studded line up. Famed underwater explorer, environmental activist and renowned underwater photographer Jill Heinerth will be appearing at TEKCamp.

Jill's accolades include induction into the Explorer's Club and the inaugural class of the Women Diver's Hall of Fame. She received the Wyland ICON Award, an honour she shares with several of her underwater heroes, including Jacques Cousteau, Robert Ballard and Dr Sylvia Earle. Jill is a motivational speaker, prolific author of numerous books on technical diving and a pioneer in the field of technical rebreather diving.

Thanks to the good folk at Suunto UK, Jill will be flying in from across the pond to share her passion for exploration, teaching and 'all things

water' with TEKCamp attendees. Attendees will get the chance to not only meet and chat with Jill, but dive with her too, as Jill actively participating in TEKCamp's in-water tech-diving workshops. With her extensive experience as a pioneer in technical diving, this is a unique opportunity to learn from and dive with one of the world's leading technical divers.

Now in its fifth year, TEKCamp has helped many divers realise their diving ambitions. Whether you're a recreational diver looking to 'go tech' or a technical diver who simply wants to take your diving to a whole new level under the guidance of some of Europe's top technical diving instructors, TEKCamp is not to be missed.

TEKCamp 2015 takes place at Vobster Quay between 13-17 July 2015. For more information, visit the TEKCamp website at:

www.tekcamp.co.uk

NEW CE-APPROVED CCR NOW AVAILABLE

There is a new CCR in town that has gained CE-approval – the Liberty. This closed-circuit rebreather comes from the Czech Republic, and the team behind its development and production is Liberty Systems, with all the subsystems manufactured by Divesoft, well-known to techies for their He/O analyzer and Freedom dive computers.

According to Liberty Systems, the rebreather is designed to be 'fault-tolerant' - i.e. no single malfunction in the electronic system can cause a breakdown of the whole apparatus. And even multiple malfunctions often do not lead to a complete breakdown. For instance, where both handset cables are cut, the HUD cable torn out, and a hole is drilled into one of the computer compartments in the head, the system functions sufficiently. The remaining control

computer continues to maintain the oxygen partial pressure at the last set point. So what if you are at 100m below the surface and all four oxygen cells get damaged? The dive continues, as the rebreather will measure the oxygen indirectly using the helium sensors. The same level of sophistication is applied to the design and manufacture of all the mechanical parts of the CCR Liberty. Due to this, the work of breathing is only 1.58 J/l in 100m depth, and this WOB puts the Liberty among the world's best. The Liberty is also the first rebreather in the world certified without any exceptions or exclusions according to EN 14143:2013. Training is available already with the IANTD, and a few other technical diving training agencies are to follow shortly.

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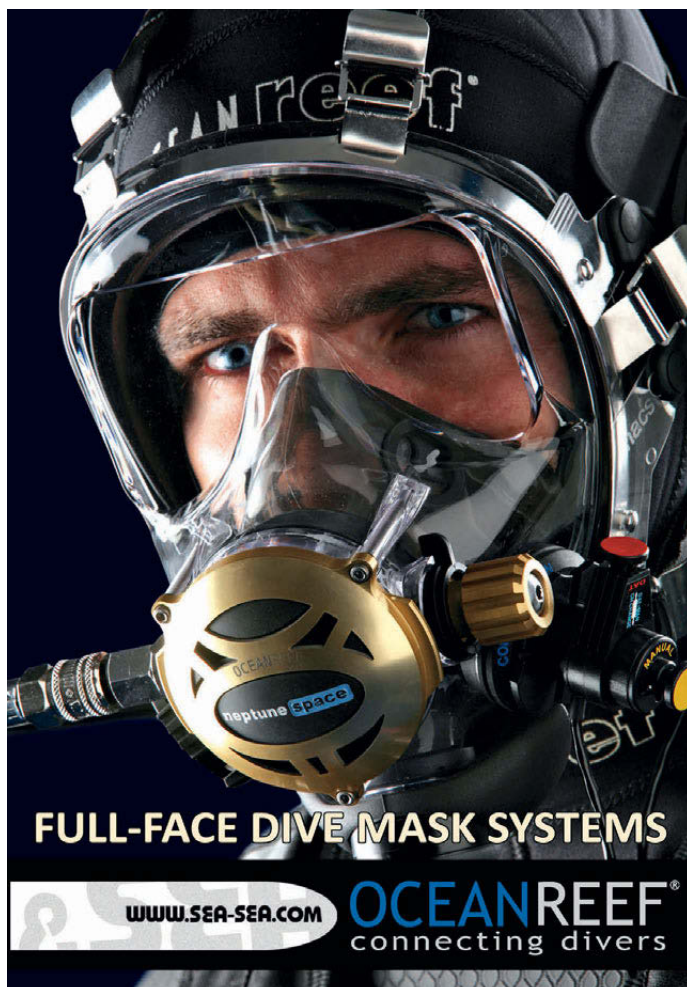


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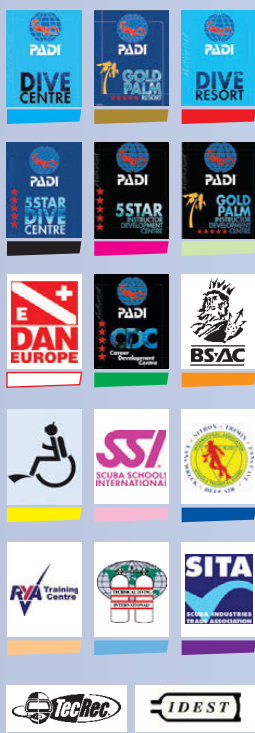


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ACC.....Accommodation
AIP.....All inclusive package
AT.....Airport transfers
AYRD.....All year round diving
BH.....Boat hire
CAOS.....Compressed are onsite
CH.....Car hire
EA.....Environment activities
EH.....Equipment hire
ESI.....English speaking instructors
FCF.....Families catered for
LB.....Liveboards
NDCF.....Non-divers catered for
OWs.....Other watersports
TD.....Tech diving
UWP.....Underwater photography

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Recreational boat dives. Incredible shore diving.
Nitrox. Cathy Church. U/W photo centre. 53
Rooms for accommodations. Bar, restaurant
onsite. EH, ESI, EA, ACC, FCF, AT (with packages),
ATRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCP, CAOS (with packages)



CYPRUS

CYDIVE DIVE CYPRUS

20, Myrra Complex 33,

Poseidonos Ave 1,

Paphos 8042,

Cyprus.

Tel: 00 357 26 934271

Email: info@cydive.com

Website: www.cydive.com

PADI. The First PADI 5★ Career Development Centre &
Centre of Excellence in Cyprus. CAOS, EH, CHAIP, Acc,
FCF, AT, ESI's, EA's, BH, AYRD, UWP, OW's, NDCP. Fantastic
Location, an exciting programme with 2 Boat Dives &
Daytrips Daily. Instructor programmes 4 times a year.



LARNACA DIVE-IN

HTTC Ltd

(Hyperbaric Therapy Treatment Centre)

Poseidonia Medical Centre

47a Eleftherias Avenue,

Aradippou,

Larnaca,

CYPRUS 7102

Tel: 00357 24 252501/24 hr Emergency

Diver Help Line 99 518837

Fax: 00357 24 252502

Email: info@hbocypus.com

Website: www.hbocypus.com

Opening Hours: 9-5 Mon-Sat.

24/7 Emergency Diver Response. Air to 232 Bar.
If you are concerned or feel that you have unusual
signs or symptoms after a dive please always get it
checked. We have a 24/7, 365 days service with a
full Hyperbaric Medical team on standby at our 14-
Man fully computerized, HAUX 2200 Starmed Unit.
We are the Preferred Provider for IDAN, UK Armed
Forces, US Armed Forces, NATO and many more. We
offer Direct Insurance billing for all treatments. Also
Dry Dives to 40 metres, PADI Chamber Specialty
Courses, DAN In-Chamber Tender Courses, DAN
Chamber Operator Courses, DAN Consumer and
Instructor Courses to all Levels.



SCUBA MONKEY LTD

36c Ayias Mavris

Tel: 35723724622

Email: dive@scuba-monkey.com

Website: www.scuba-monkey.com

Opening Hours: 8:30 am - 7pm (or later)
Air to 300 Bar. PADI Dive Resort. EH, ESI, EA, AIP, ACC,
FCF, UWP, CH, NDCP, CAOS. Nitrox. Retail,
photography. Non diver to professional. U/W Naturalist.
Scooter DPV. Underwater Weddings. Education. DPV.
Videography. Intern Program. Fish Identification.
Multilevel Diver. Wreck, freediving, search and recovery.
Equipment Specialists. Underwater Navigation. Deep,
night and boat diving. Project aware.



EGYPT

AQUARIUS DIVING CLUB

Coral Sea,
Waterworld Nabq Bay,
Sharm el Sheikh

Tel: (+20) 01001232785

Email: info@aquariusredsea.com

Website: www.aquariusredsea.com

Opening Hours: 09:00 - 17:00

Air to 200 Bar. PADI 5★ EH, LB, ESI, EA, ACC,
FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCP, CAOS. Dive
centre's in Sharm el Sheikh, Hurgharda, Marsa
Alam, Hamata, Makadi & Sahl Hashish. Diving for
complete beginners to experienced divers.
Diving trips from shore, daily boat, zodiac and
liveaboards.



CAMEL DIVE CLUB & HOTEL

Centre of Na'ama Bay,
PO Box 10,
Sharm

El Sheikh,

South Sinai,

Egypt.

Tel: +20 69 3600 700

Fax: +20 69 3600 601

Email: info@cameldive.com

Website: www.cameldive.com

PADI 5★ Gold Palm IDC Centre, BSAC, Acc. AT, LB,
ESI, EA, BH, AYRD, UWP, OW, NDCP, TD, CAOS, EH,
FCF. The Red Seas friendliest diver hotel and dive
centre. Join us for spectacular diving and the best
apres dive in Sharm. Established 1986



CORAL SEA WATERWORLD

PO Box 317,
Sharm El Sheikh, South
Egypt.

Tel: +2 069 3710500

Fax: +2 069 3710511

Email: waterworld@coralsearesorts.com

Website: www.coralsearesorts.com

EH, LB, ESI, EA, AIP, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH,
BH, NDCP, CAOS. Nitrox. PADI 5★. When it's time
to plan your next family vacation, choose Coral Sea
Waterworld Resort and experience the newest
water park in Nabq Bay, Sharm El Sheikh.



EAGLE DIVERS

Based in Ocean Club Hotel,
23 City Council Street,
Hadaba,
Sharm el Sheikh

Tel: 002 01200001590

002 01200001591

Email: info@eagle-divers.com

Website: www.eagle-divers.com

Opening Hours: 8.00am - 6.00pm

PADI 5★ resort & TecRec Centre. Nitrox. Air to
220 Bar. EH, LB, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT,
AYRD, UWP, NDCP, CAOS. Providing first class
personalised service in one of the worlds top
diving destinations. We pride ourselves on
making your Red Sea holiday the best it can be.



OVERSEAS DIVE CENTRES

ELITE DIVING'S DIVERS UNITED

Uni Sharm Hotel,
Sharm Elshees Street, Um El Sid Hill,
Hadaba, Sharm El Sheikh
Tel: 0020 1224 308 780
Email: info@elite-diving.com
Web: www.elite-diving.com
Opening Hours: 8:00am to 19:00pm
Air to 220 Bar. Divers United PADI 5 Resort. Elite Diving. BSAC Diver Training Center. EH, LB, ESI, EA, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. NITROX, ATOL Bonded through UK Tour operator. British Owner managers, offering Daily Boat Diving on some of the best reefs in the world, House reef, PADI & BSAC courses, Liveaboards, Special excursions.



ILIOS DIVE CLUB

Steigenberger Al Dau Resort,
Hurghada,
Red Sea, Egypt
Tel: 0020 65 346 5442
Email: info@iliostivedclub.com
Website: www.iliostivedclub.com
Opening Hours: 8am - 5pm
Air to 200 Bar. Nitrox, Padi Course up to Divemaster, Handicapped diving, Snorkeling. EH, ESI, EA, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. Ilios Dive Club - One with the Red Sea. The Steigenberger Al Dau Resort, Red Sea, Hurghada is the home of Ilios Dive Club. On an area of 360m² we are offering everything diver, skin diver and those going to be need to have a perfect holiday. Due to over 20 years of experience in the professional management of a dive centre we guarantee our guests wonderful dives in the Red Sea.



OCEAN COLLEGE

Hilton Fayrouz Hotel,
Naama Bay,
Sharm El Sheikh
Tel: 0020 127792749
Email: info@ocean-college.com
Website: www.ocean-college.com
Opening Hours: 8am - 6pm.
Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ IDC, Nitrox, ATOL Bonded. EH, LB, ESI, TD, EA, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. Ocean College is one of the premier dive operators in the Red Sea and offers diving services for experienced divers and PADI diver education



RED SEA DIVING COLLEGE

Sultana Building,
Naama Bay,
South Sinai,
Egypt
Tel: 0020 69 3600145
Email: info@redseacollege.com
Website: www.redseacollege.com
Opening hours: 8am - 9pm.
Air to 200 Bar. EH, LB, ESI, TD, EA, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. Nitrox, National Geographic. PADI 5★ CDC. Multi Award winning centre offering all courses from entry level to professional. Conducted from a stunning beach-front location, boasting the best facilities in Sharm.



SINAI COLLEGE

Sinai College,
Sharm Inn Amarin,
Sharm El Sheikh,
South Sinai, Egypt
Tel: (+20) 01154055100
Email: info@sina-college.com
Website: www.sina-college.com
Opening hours: 7.45am - 6.30pm, 7 days a week. Air to 200 Bar. EH, LB, ESI, EA, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, NDCF, CAOS. Nitrox, PADI Dive Centre. We are an European run and managed dive center based in Sharm El Sheikh with a friendly and professional atmosphere. We provide daily diving, mini safaris and liveaboards.



SINAI DIVERS

Ghazala Hotel,
Sharm El Sheikh,
South Sinai,
Tel: 00 20 069 3600 697
Fax: 00 20 069 3600 158
Email: info@sinaidivers.com
Website: www.sinaidivers.com
Opening Hours: 08:00 - 20:00 summer/
08:00 - 18:30 winter. Air to 200 bar. EH, LB, ESI, TD, EA, Acc, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, FCF, CAOS, AT. Free Nitrox for Nitrox certified divers. NG. PADI 5 Gold Palm Resort. SSI, CMAS (Barakuda) CDC & TDI (Dahab). Easy house reef in the centre Naama Bay, safari boats, north & south. Full tec centre in Dahab, Resort & dive centre in Marsa Alam & Tabla.



FUERTEVENTURA

DEEP BLUE DIVING S.L

Barcelo el Castillo,
Caleta de Fuste,
Fuerteventura, 35610
Tel: +34 606 275 468 or
+34 928 163 172
Email: info@deep-blue-diving.com
Website: www.deep-blue-diving.com
Facebook: Deep.Blue.Diving.Fuerteventura
Opening Hours: All year 9am-5pm
Air to 200. PADI 5★ GOLD PALM IDC CENTRE & IE LOCATION. EH, ESI, AIP, ACC, FCF, AYRD, UWP, NDCF, CAOS. WIFI, Equipment Washing and Storage Rooms. Discover Scuba to Instructor. All year round, water front location, small groups, 20-25m visibility. Exclusive dive sites, after dive sector.



GREECE

CRETE UNDERWATER CENTER

Mirabello Beach Hotel, Agios Nikolaos
72100 Crete, Greece. PO Box 100
Tel/Fax: 00 30 284 1022 406
Mobile: 0030 6945 2444 34 /
0030 6944 1268 46
Email: info@creteunderwatercenter.com
Website: www.creteunderwatercenter.com
PADI Resort D.C., Day Boats/ Servicing/
Accommodation/ Technical/ IANTD/ PADI/BSAC
Resort Center/Air/Nitrox/ Trimix/ KlonSale. Based within a hotel complex directly on the beach, we provide a great variety of diving services for Beginners through to Advanced and Technical Divers. As a well equipped resort and diving centre, we tailor packages to suit your individual or group needs.



NAVY'S WATERWORLD

Kamari Beach,
Santorini
Tel/Fax: 0030 22860 28190
Email: info@navyswaterworld.gr
Website: www.navyswaterworld.gr
Opening Hours: 8:00 - 22:00
Air to 200 Bar. EH, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. Nitrox. PADI 5★ IDC Dive Center. Daily 2 tank trips around the volcanic shoreline of Santorini. Dive in the marine protected area, and enjoy the caves, wrecks, wall diving, reefs and more.



NERO-SPORT DIVING CENTER

Limni Keriou,
Zakynthos/ GR-29092
Tel: 0030 26950 28481
0030 698 5666645
0030 26950 49125
Email: info-diving@nero-sport.de
Website: www.nero-sport.com
Opening Hours: 9:00 - 18:00
Air to 200 Bar. PADI DIVE CENTRE, IAC 5★ EH, ESI, Acc, AT, FCF, AYRD, UWP, NDCF, CAOS. Free childcare. 2-5 trips a day. Day trips. Night diving. Own accommodation. Snack bar. Great family offers. Special group offers. Diving all year round.



HONDURAS

UTILA DIVE CENTRE/MANGO INN

Utila,
Bay Islands,
Honduras
Tel/Fax: 5044253327
Email: info@utiladivecentre.com
Website: www.utiladivecentre.com
www.goproutila.com
Opening Hours: 7am to 7pm
Air to 220 Bar. PADI Career Development Centre and IANTD facility. Nitrox, Trimix, Rebreather friendly, National Geographic Facility. EH, ESI, TD, EA, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CAOS. PADI certification courses from beginner to Instructor (monthly PADI IDC's) with diving packages and accommodation. The island of Utila offers spectacular Caribbean diving and Whale sharks.



IBIZA

PUNTA DIVE

Cala Martina,
Es Cana,
Santa Eulalia,
Ibiza,
Spain.
Tel: (0034) 971 33 67 26
(0034) 971 31 94 13
Email: info@puntadive.com
Website: www.puntadive.com
Opening Hours: 9:00 - 19:00.
Air to 225 Bar. PADI 5★ IDC. EH-ESI-EA-FCF-AT-
UWP-CH-BH-NDCF-CAOS. 3 centres on Ibiza. Dive don Pedro, sunken fish farm, the cathedral etc. 2 fast RIB's. Group and club offers available. Fun, friendly and professional.



INDONESIA

AQUAMARINE DIVING - BALI

Jalan Petitenget 2A,
Kuta-Legian-Seminyak,
Bali 80361, Indonesia.
Tel: +62 361 4738 020
Fax: +62 361 4738 021
Email: info@aquamarinediving.com
Website: www.aquamarinediving.com
Opening Hours: 8:00-18:00
Air to 200 Bar. PADI 5★ Gold Palm Resort 6344. EH, Nitrox, ESI, EA, CAOS, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF. Bali's only British owner-operated dive company. Only offers Bali's better dive locations (wrecks, drifts, Mantas, shore, deep). Daily Trips and Customised Dived Packages. UWP Specialists.



BLUE MARLIN DIVE

Gili Trawangan, Gili Meno,
Gili Air, Senggigi,
Lombok,
Indonesia.
Tel: +62 (0) 370 632424
Fax: +62 (0) 370 642286
Email: info@bluemarlinlive.com
Website: www.bluemarlinlive.com
PADI 5★ Premier IDC Centre. Acc., AT, LB, ESI, EA, BH, AYRD, UWP, OW, NDCF, TD, EH, CH, AIP, CAOS, FCF. The Gili Islands most professional & friendly 5★ IDC Centre (established 16 years). Spectacular world class ocean diving. Ocean front restaurant, bar, night club & freshwater pool. Full retail dive shop on site. DM internship programmes. Full technical diving facility offering TDI & IANTD. Blue Marlin has it's own luxury liveboard offering trips throughout the Indonesian Archipelago. Packages available.



TWO FISH DIVERS

One operator/three tropical-island resorts:
Bunaken Island,
North Sulawesi
Lembah Straits,
North Sulawesi
Lembongan Island,
Bali
Tel: 0062-811-432-805
Email: info@twofishdivers.com
Website: www.twofishdivers.com
Air to 200 bar. PADI 5★ IDC. Nitrox, EH, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, NDCF, CAOS. Two Fish Divers is owned and run by Tina and Nigel from UK. Each of their three tropical-island resorts offer a friendly and relaxed atmosphere with some of the best diving in Indonesia:
1) Bunaken Island, North Sulawesi - the award-winning reefs of Bunaken Marine Park.
2) Lembah Straits, North Sulawesi - the muck-diving capital of the world.
3) Lembongan Island, Bali - home of the mola-mola's and manta's of Bali.
All dive resorts are PADI 5★, have european management, max 24 divers, small dive groups, and a friendly and personal service. Organise a trip to one of more of these resorts, or book an Indo Dive Safari with all three resorts!



LANZAROTE

THE DIVE SHOP LANZAROTE

C.C Matagorda,
Locale 44
Puerto del Carmen
Lanzarote
Tel: (+34)928 512-865
Mobile: 652-013-929
Email: info@thediveshoplanzarote.com
Website: www.thediveshoplanzarote.com
Opening Hours: Monday to Saturday 9:00 to 6:00
Sunday on request EH, ESI, TD, FCF, AYRD, UWP, BD, NDCF, CAO. Nitrox. PADI 5★ Resort



MANTA DIVING LANZAROTE

Juan Carlos 1,
No.6, Local 5,
Puerto del Carmen
Tel: (0034) 928 516815
Mobile: (0034) 649 121142
Email: info@manta-diving-lanzarote.com
manta-diving-lanzarote-val@hotmail.com
Skype: manta-dive-centre
Website: www.manta-diving-lanzarote.com
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 8.30-5.30pm all year round.
Air to 200 Bar. PADI IRRA RESORT CENTRE, BSAC RESORT CENTRE. OSS, ACC, AT, AYRD, BH, CAOS, CH, NDCF, EA, EH, UWP, ESI, FCF. PADI. Courses & Specialties, Discover Scuba & Snorkelling. Fully equipped, spacious centre, 150mtrs from best sites in Lanzarote. Group Rates All level of divers welcome. NITROX.



SAFARI DIVING LANZAROTE

Playa de la Barrilla 4, Playa Chica Puerto Del Carmen,
Tel: 0034 928511992 or
0034 646752512
Email: enquiry@safaridiving.com
Website: www.safaridiving.com
PADI, PADI 5★ Centre, BSAC, PADI Premier Centre, NAUI, SAA, Acc, AT, LB, ESI, EAS, BH, AYRD, UWP, OWs, NDCF, ATOL, TD, CAOS, EH, CH, AIP, FCF, SSI & RYA. We are a PADI dive centre. BSAC Premier Centre and Seamanship Centre. SSI Diver Training Centre. British owned, beach based diving centre, established for over 18 years. Spectacular Ocean diving all year round which include reefs, drop offs, wrecks etc to suit all levels of diver and the complete beginner! Special offers available for dive packages for shore, night and boat dives.



MALTA

DIVE DEEP BLUE MALTA

9/11 Annanija Street,
Bugibba, St Pauls Bay,
Malta SPB 1320

Tel: 00 356 21 583946

Mob: 00 356 99 868957

Email: dive@divedeepblue.com

Website: www.divedeepblue.com

Opening Hours: 8am till 6pm.

PADI 5★ IDC. EH, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS, Nitrox / Trimix. Facilities include: Dive Shop, Private parking, swimming pool, sun deck, gas filling/blending station, equipment rental/sales, drying and storage areas, toilets/ showers, A/C class rooms, technical facility, CCR support.



PARADISE DIVING

Paradise Bay Resort Hotel,
Cirkewwa,
Mellieha, Malta

Tel: 00356 21574116 /

00356 21524363,

00356 99491877

Email: sales@paradisediving.com

Website: www.paradisediving.com

Opening Hours: 9:00-17:00.

Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ RESORT. EH, ESI, EA, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS, Nitrox.

Three summer boat dives daily, Malta, Gozo, Comino. No boat surcharge! Private beach location, Cirkewwa. PADI courses. Free group places. Free transport, Mellieha, Bugibba, Qawra.



PORTUGAL

INDIGO DIVERS

Rua do Mercado Lote, M Loja A, Areias de

São, João, Albufeira - 8200-269, Portugal.

Tel/Shop: 00351 289 587013

Mobile: 00 351 913 999 913

Fax: 00351 289 587 013

Email: info@indigo-divers.pt

Web: www.indigo-divers.pt

Opening Hours: 8:30 - 18:00

later if night dives.

EH, ESI, EA, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, NDCF, CAOS. We personalise our dives for you! Experienced professional, friendly instructors. All courses to instructor level. Plus specialties. Guided dives from boat, beach. New wreck dives! ■



SPAIN

S'ALGAR DIVING MENORCA

Paseo Martimo, S/N Salgar, San Luis,
Menorca,

Tel: +34 971 15 06 01

Mobile: +34 605 054 607

Email: info@salgardiving.com

FB: facebook.com/menorcasalgardiving

Open: May - October

PADI 5★ RESORT, BSAC RESORT, IEH, ESI, FCF, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS. NITROX for courses and special dives. DIVING, COURSES, TRY-DIVES, SNORKELLING, BOATEXCURSIONS etc. Reefs, Caverns, Caves. Divesites for Beginners and Pro's alike. COMFORTABLE BOAT, PROFESSIONAL STAFF and the BEST LOCATION IN MENORCA! Perfect for FAMILIES. Specials ind.

ACCOMMODATION for CLUBS and GROUPS of 4+ pax. Check out our FACEBOOK site for much more information and photos. ■ ■ ■



THAILAND

SCUBA CAT DIVING

Main shop: 78/19 Thawee Wong Road,
Patong Beach, Phuket Thailand, 83150

Opening hours: 8:30 - 9.00pm

7 days a week

Second shop: 30/64 Moo.1 Saiyuan Road,
Rawai Phuket Thailand 83130

Opening hours 11.00-7.00pm 7 days a week

Tel: 00 66 76 293 120/1 Fax: 00 76 293 122

Email: info@scubacat.com

Web: www.scubacat.com or www.scubacat-idc.com
PADI 5★ CDC. EH, Nitrox, LB, ESI, TD, EA, CAOS, FCF, AYRD, UWP, NDCF. At Scuba Cat we pride ourselves on the wide range of services and facilities we have on offer including Liveaboards, Daytrips, Half day trips, Tech diving, Handicapped Diving, Environmental and all PADI Courses. www.youtube.com/user/ScubaCat2007



SEA BEES DIVING

1/3 MOO 9, VISET Road, CHALONG,
PHUKET 83130. THAILAND

Tel: +66 (0)76 381 765

+ 66 (0)76 381 943

Fax: +66 (0)76 280 476

Email: info@sea-bees.diving.com

Website: www.sea-bees.com

Opening Hours: 7.30am to 9pm every day

Air to 200 bar. EH, LB, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS, Nitrox, National Geographic, SSI Diamond Instructor Training Centre. Located in Phuket, Khao Lak, Koh Phi Phi & Pak Meng - with our fleet of daytrip and liveboard vessels, we are 'Adventure In Good Hands' ■



SIMILAN DIVING SAFARIS Co LTD

13/19 Moo 7 Kukkak, Kholak, Takuapa,
Phang-Nga 82190, Thailand

Tel: 076 485 470

Fax: 076 485 471

Email: info@similan-diving-safaris.com

Website: www.similan-diving-safaris.com

www.burma-diving-safaris.com

Opening Hours: 9am to 9pm.

Air to 200 bar. EH, LB, ESI, EA, AIP, ACC, FCF, AT, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. PADI 5 Star Dive Centre. Liveboard specialist, PADI courses, Nitrox aboard our boat. Eco-friendly toiletries. Similan, Surin, Islands. Myanmar (Burma). Mergui Archipelago. Day trips, diving, snorkelling, European, established for 15 years. ■



TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

DIVE PROVO

Ports of Call, Providenciales,
Turks and Caicos Islands

Tel: 001 649 946 5040 (shop)

Fax: 001 649 946 5936

Email: diving@diveprovo.com

Website: www.diveprovo.com

Hours: 8am-5pm daily. Air to 200 Bar. EST. Hotel/dive packages to suit every taste. PADI 5★ Resort, SSI Resort. OSS, EH, ESI, EA, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCF, CAOS. Nitrox 32%. Daily 2 tank dives to all areas around Provo; West Caicos, French Cay, N.W. Point, Grace Bay, Pine Cay. Air, Nitrox, instruction and dedicated snorkel trips. British owners Alan and Clare Jardine. 1990 - 2010: Celebrating 20 years of diving as it should be! ■ ■



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DIVESHACK SCUBA SCHOOL

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SLM3111, Malta

Tel: 00 356 2133 8558

00 356 9999 3483

Email: info@divemalta.com

Website: www.divemalta.com

Opening Hours: 7 Days a week from
08.00 till 18.00 (17.00 in winter).

PADI 5★ IDC, National Geographic and TecRec Facility. Seafront Location. Resident Course Director. All PADI Courses Taught. Rebreather Friendly. Escorted Dives from Shore/Boat round Malta, Gozo and Comino. Fully Stocked Shop. Operating from Comino May to Oct. Nitrox, Trimix, National Geographic. Speciality side mount and Tec side mount. Acc, AIP, AT, AYRD, BH, BS, CAOS, CH, EA, EH, ESI, FCF, NDCF, OSS + OWS, OST, TD, UWP, ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



DIVEWISE

Westin Dragonara Resort, Malta

Tel: (+356) 21 356 441

Email: info@divewise.com.mt

Website: www.divewise.com.mt

Opening Hours: 7 days a week

from 9am till finish.

Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ CDC Centre. Nitrox, Trimix, Boat Diving, Day trips. EH, ESI, TD, EA, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS. PADI's No 1 centre in Malta offering all courses but specialising in Technical diving & Instructor level. ■ ■



GOZO AQUA SPORTS

GOZO AQUA SPORTS,

Rubat Road, Marsalforn, Gozo,
Malta, MFN 9014

Tel: 0035621563037

Email: dive@gozoaqua sports.com

Website: www.gozoaqua sports.com

Opening Hours: 7 Days a week 08:00 - 18:00.

Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ IDC - DSAT TECREC centre & BSAC Resort, ESI, TD, Acc, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF, CAOS, Nitrox and Trimix Available, Technical & Rebreather Diver Support. Free WI-FI, Free Tea/Coffee/Water, Rinsing/Drying/Storage facilities, Wreck, Boat, Cavern, Digital Photography, Drysuit, Enriched Air, Equipment Specialist, Multilevel, Naturalist, Navigation, Night, PPB, Oxygen Provider, Search & Recovery, Project AWARE Fish ID Specialities. ■ ■



SEA SHELL DIVE COVE

Marfa Road, Mellieha, Malta

Tel: +356 21522595 /

+ 356/21521062

Fax: +356 2152 1062

Email: info@seashell-divecove.com

Website: www.seashell-divecove.com

EH, Nitrox, ESI, TD, CAOS, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCF. Family run dive centre.

Technical diving & courses. Escorted dives from shore/boat Malta, Gozo, Comino. Wreck dive specialist. Latest equipment for hire & for sale. ■ ■



MEXICO

SCUBA CLUB COZUMEL

Av R Melgar Prol 5 Km 1.5,

Cozumel, Q. Roo Mexico 77600

Tel: 52+987-872-1133

US# 727-230-9613

Fax: 727-388-3638

Email: scubacozumel@cozumel.net

Website: www.scubclubcozumel.com

Opening Hours: 24/7/365.

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EnS	Y	A/C	Y
Lth	37m	Ntx	Y
Hull	steel	CCR	Y

Australia - Cairns
Spirit of Freedom
www.spiritoffreedom.com.au



Pax	29	Elec	240V
Cab	15	Cour	Y
EnS	Y	A/C	Y
Lth	30m	Ntx	Y
Hull	Alum	CCR	Y

Australia, Cairns, Queensland
Spoilsport
www.mikeball.com



Pax	18	Elec	240V
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Hull	wood	CCR	N

Bali
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Pax	16	Elec	220V
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EnS	Y	A/C	Y
Lth	29m	Ntx	Y
Hull	wood	CCR	N

Egypt, Sharm El Sheikh
VIP One
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Hull	wood	CCR	N

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Galapagos
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Hurghada - PORTO GHALIB
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Hull	steel	CCR	Y

Koror, Palau
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Lth	33m	Ntx	Y
Hull	wood	CCR	Y/N

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Lth	33m	Ntx	Y
Hull	wood	CCR	Y

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Lth	52m	Ntx	Y
Hull	steel	CCR	Y

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EnS	Y	A/C	Y
Lth	34m	Ntx	Y
Hull	steel	CCR	Y

Philippines
Cosmix Adventures Incorporated
www.dive-vasco.com



Pax	32	Elec	240
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EnS	Y	A/C	Y
Lth	49m	Ntx	Y
Hull	steel	CCR	N

Philippines
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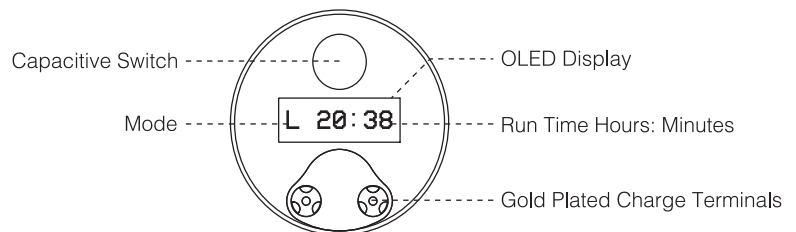
Depth Rated and pressure tested to
20 Bar / 200 meters pressure.

SPECIFICATION

Weight	231g
Output	1800 Lumens
Length	113mm
Diameter	47mm
Battery	2900 mAh
Runtime	2-24hrs
Beam Angle	20° Smooth Spot



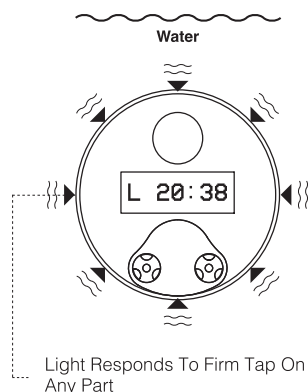
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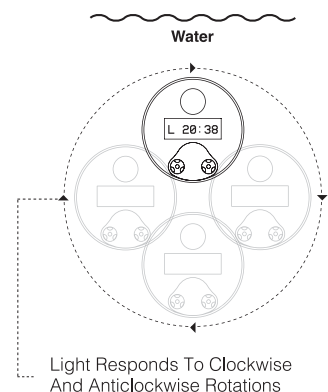
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Motion Switch / Submerged Mode



Below Water
Motion Switch / Submerged Mode



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paul ROSE

In 1963 when Cliff Richard sang 'We're all going on a summer holiday...' he was on a double-decker bus full of good mates and beautiful girls heading across Europe. I was 12 years old, hating school because I couldn't do it (I can still smell the paint from those overheating radiators) and I had a mad dream about being a diver like Mike Nelson in Sea Hunt.

It took three years for me to escape school and another three before I had my first sea dive - the most defining moment of my life: Easter at Chesil Cove with sideways sleet speeding up the dressing into my homemade wetsuit, the cool life-giving sea pouring in

fiddly little plastic clip to push into the tip of the tube for deflation. So I very rarely blew it up and I certainly never used the CO2 cylinder which was contained in the back of the vest and on the front was printed an outline of the cylinder and lever with the words "In Emergency Squeeze Here". Our technique in those circumstances was to always dump our weights which were easy and free to replace as I had made a weight mould and was casting new weights from any old bits of lead that I could find and melt down. I limited my intake of poisonous air by doing this on the balcony of my parents' flat.

When it was too rough on the coast we

"F*** off you w*****s!" which could only bring one outcome and that was the both of us repeatedly ducking under water and holding our breath in an attempt to avoid the massive rock bombardment being thrown at us. I have various imperfections on my head but one in particular remains from that little battle.

These early days flashed to the front of my mind this weekend at LIDS when I spoke at the excellent Scuba Youth Zone to a terrific group of new divers. When I asked the question "Where did you make your first sea dive?" I fully expected them to say St Abbs, Church Ope Cove, Brighton or even the unbeatable Chesil Cove but then I was blown away when

"My buddy, who had substituted street sense for bravery, shouted back 'F*** off you w*****s!' which could only bring one outcome and that was the both of us [trying] to avoid the massive rock bombardment being thrown at us"

the hood at the back of my neck and through all of the seams, my excited descent to the outflow pipe and feeling so wonderfully alive in the largest, most beautiful, wildest and least understood space on the planet.

I couldn't keep out of the water and did everything I could to get to the coast at any time. Even when we knew that the forecast must be right we still made it to the coast, fought our way in, had some kind of a dive and then battled our way back. Often enough we made it back to more or less where we started but we had some amazing experiences of popping up out of air a long way off shore in heaving seas with nothing recognisable in sight. My Beaufort life jacket had a tiny red hose for manual inflation complete with a

headed to the flooded quarries - this was a long time before people bought them and made great dive centres. The horror stories in the pub of unstable rock walls, collapsing tunnels, entanglement in crane cables and getting arrested for trespassing were only green lights for us. My learning experiences in quarries were mostly about getting lost, running out of air and being scared witless every time a terrible unidentifiable piece of quarrying equipment loomed out of the gloom.

The only injury I received from gonzo quarry diving was after my buddy and I surfaced in the middle of a quarry to be greeted by a bunch of yobs on top of the high rock wall shouting at us. My buddy, who had substituted street sense for bravery, shouted back

every single one of them, some as young as 12, said they had made their first dives in the Red Sea, Cozumel, Turkey and the Med! This is obviously wonderful as it means they get started in great conditions, can rack up a good number of dives and experience relatively quickly. I love it. Maybe I could offer 'Paul Rose style vintage UK diving experience holidays' to round off their diving education?

Paul is the Vice President of the Royal Geographical Society. For 10 years he was the Base Commander of Rothera Research Station in Antarctica and was also the BAS Diving Officer. He presents television and radio programmes for the BBC.

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